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Using Context To Communicate: Romanian Sign Language Learners And Their Communication Strategies

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USING CONTEXT TO COMMUNICATE: ROMANIAN SIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THEIR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

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Abbreviations

CS	Communication Strategy
FSL	Filipino Sign Language
KSL	Kenyan Sign Language
L1	First language
L2	Second language (or any language other than the speaker's first language)
LSR	Limbajul Semnelor Romanesc (Romanian Sign Language)
NS	Native Signer
R1T1	Round 1, Task 1
R1T2	Round 1, Task 2
R2T1	Round 2, Task 1
R2T2	Round 2, Task 2
SLCL	Sign Language Classifier

Abstract

This study focuses on the communication strategies used by second language learners of Romanian Sign Language (LSR), including learners of different proficiency levels, and investigates whether the learner's proficiency level affects the kinds or variety of communication strategies they use. Unlike previous studies of communication strategies by language learners, it focuses on learners of a signed rather than a spoken language.

The study consisted of two tasks—the first being a structured task where the learner was given a list of ten words to communicate to an interlocutor (a Deaf native signer). The second task was less structured and asked the learner to describe a video to the interlocutor.

The study finds that learners choose their communication strategies by thinking about the knowledge they share with the interlocutor and then making conscious decisions about the most effective strategies to use with that particular person. This is not necessarily a function of their proficiency in the language. In fact, unlike findings from previous studies, beginning learners in the present study used more LSR-based strategies than the advanced learners, which can be explained by the fact that their language background did not happen to overlap as much with that of the interlocutor. In interviews, learners stated that they chose certain strategies because they knew they would be more familiar to the interlocutor. These statements show that the learners are not solely at the mercy of their proficiency level in the language but can use their knowledge of the interlocutor and the situation in order to communicate. The study also showed that more advanced learners tended to use more variety in their choice of communication strategies.

This study also found that it is not necessarily helpful to analyze communication strategies in terms of L1 vs. L2 strategies. It would be more helpful to think of all of the different languages that are available to the learners, since these are the choices that the learners are thinking through when they are talking to the interlocutor. The learner may use their L1 more often if the interlocutor also knows that language, and less often if their L1 is not known to the interlocutor.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Everyone at some point in their life has had a moment when they did not know how to communicate—perhaps because they drew a blank on a word, or perhaps they just were not sure how to effectively phrase something. When a person is learning a second language, they inevitably come across even more of these situations where they are at a loss to communicate what they want to communicate, either because they do not know a word, or cannot remember a word or structure they have learned, etc. During these moments, we all (whether we are using our first language, or our second, or third) use communication strategies (CSs), whether consciously or not, to help us bridge the communication gap. There has been a lot of interest in the field of second-language acquisition in the study of communication strategies—how learners use them, why they help with language learning, and how they can be taught to learners as tools to enhance their language learning.

Bialystok (1990) describes a communication strategy as a person's attempt to overcome a gap in their knowledge of a second language, when that gap threatens to shatter the fluency of the communication. Communication strategies become necessary when a speaker wants to communicate something, but they do not have the linguistic repertoire to do so (Tarone 1981). Communication strategies provide solutions to overcome those barriers.

The reason a learner uses a communication strategy is because the learner does not want the conversation to come to a grinding halt. In order to "maintain the fluency of communication" (Hsieh 2014), the speaker can choose one of two methods: either they

can avoid the topic, or they can make an alternate attempt to communicate (Tarone 1981 p. 65). The literature names these methods in different ways—one approach (Abunawas 2012) distinguishes reduction strategies, where the learner tries to avoid a topic or word, from achievement strategies, where the learner finds an alternate way to communicate the topic or word. Reduction strategies are also called avoidance strategies, and achievement strategies are also called compensatory strategies (Hsieh 2014). For the purposes of the present study, I have chosen one term from each set, distinguishing avoidance vs. achievement strategies. I decided to choose one name from each set because the "avoidance" and "achievement" terms seemed to me to be clearer and more self-explanatory than the names "reduction" and "compensatory".

There are two different approaches to understanding the underlying nature of communication strategies. The psycholinguistic approach focuses on the plans that a speaker makes and their execution of communication strategies to carry out those plans (Hsieh 2014: 2). In the interactional approach, both interlocutors are regarded as using the tools (strategies) available to them to negotiate meaning in an attempt to reach an agreement on a communicative goal (Tarone 1981: 42). The learner is either relying on their own resources (psycholinguistic), or the resources of both themselves and the interlocutor (interactional) to solve the communication problem. The psycholinguistic approach does not give any attention to the interlocutor's role in the exchange, which is one of the reasons that the interactional theory is considered to be more comprehensive (Hsieh 2014: 3).

Communication strategies have also been classified as strategic competence, which is the third branch of what Canale & Swain (1980) call "communicative competence". Communicative competence is the knowledge and skills needed to communicate in another language. (As Abunawas 2012 notes, the first two branches, grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, are specific to the language being learned, but strategic

competence is somewhat universal in that it is based on the learner and not on the language being learned.)

Some research on communication strategies has focused on both production strategies (used when the learner is speaking) and comprehension strategies (used when the learner is listening) (Jamshidnejad 2011; Nakatani 2010), while others have focused solely on production strategies (Rodriguez Cervantes & Roux Rodriguez 2012; Zhao & Intaraprasert 2013). Hsieh (2014: 1) also compares communication strategies (a form of output strategy) to learning strategies (a form of input strategy).

Previous research on communication strategies has found that learners with low proficiency in the language use communication strategies more often (likely because they find themselves in more situations that require communication strategies to cross the communication gap). However, learners with higher proficiency in the language use communication strategies more effectively (Awang, Maros & Ibrahim 2015; Hsieh 2014).

Wang, Lai & Leslie (2015) compare the communication strategies used by low-proficiency learners to those used by high-proficiency learners. They find that low-proficiency learners tend to use more L1 strategies (strategies based on their first language, such as literally translating a word or phrase from their first language into the target language), while the more advanced learners tend to use more L2 strategies (strategies based on the target language, such as describing a word using the target language).

The type of task used in the research also affects the communication strategy data. Awang, Maros & Ibrahim (2015) find that there is a difference between the results for a task-based study vs. a more natural conversation: in the task-based study, the most common strategy was circumlocution, or description of the object or concept, while in natural conversations, learners were more likely to use restructuring strategies, followed by lexical repetitions (2015: 58).

In light of these previous studies, I set out to study learners of Romanian Sign Language (Limbajul Semnelor Romanesc, or LSR), since learners of a sign language have not been studied in the context of communication strategies. The present study examines the communication strategies used by five different learners of Romanian Sign Language. Each learner was asked to carry out two communication tasks with a native signer—one structured task and the other less structured. The beginning learners repeated the tasks seven months later, to see how their strategies changed as they became more proficient in the language. The study especially examines the effect of other languages that the learners have previously learned on the communication strategies that they use, as well as the effect of their proficiency in the language on their choice of communication strategies.

The learners who participated in this study made conscious decisions about which strategies to use based on their shared knowledge with the interlocutor. This finding shows that communication strategy use may not depend as much on proficiency as was previously thought, but instead is a function of what the learner understands about the knowledge that they share with the interlocutor.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research questions

The main purpose of this study was to observe the different kinds of communication strategies used by learners of Romanian Sign Language (LSR) and assess how they compare with the findings of other spoken language communication strategy research. The study was designed to address the following questions:

1. What kinds of communication strategies did the learners use?
2. Did the learner's proficiency level affect the kinds of communication strategies they used? Would a learner with a lower proficiency level use more L1 strategies, and a learner with a higher proficiency level use more L2 strategies?
3. Did the learner's proficiency level affect the number of different communication strategies they used?

Once the study was completed, it also answered the following questions:

1. To what extent are the learners aware of the strategies that they are using?
2. Is it helpful to analyze interactions in terms of L1 vs. L2 strategies?

2.2 Participants

This study included two different kinds of participants: Deaf native signers of Romanian Sign Language, and learners who were learning Romanian Sign Language. There were three Deaf native signers, ranging in age from 16 to 33 years old, who were recruited to help with the research through the Deaf church in the city of Oradea, Romania. All three signers are fluent in Romanian Sign Language and have enough understanding of written Romanian to recognize fingerspelled words.

There were five learners (all hearing), who all work for an organization which supports translation into sign languages. All are professionally involved in multilingual work and have a diversity of linguistic backgrounds. Some of the participants chose to use pseudonyms, while others did not.

- Rachel speaks English as her first language (the language used in the word lists and some of the videos). She also has experience learning Romanian and Spanish, as well as four other sign languages (American Sign Language, Austrian Sign Language, Colombian Sign Language, and Egyptian Sign Language), and has experience in international signing. At the time of the research, she had been learning LSR for about four years and self-assessed at roughly a C2 level on the CEFR scale (Council of Europe 2001).
- Ionuț speaks Romanian as his first language, and also has experience learning English, Kenyan Sign Language, and Tanzanian Sign Language. He is married to a hearing native signer of LSR. At the time of the research, he had been learning LSR for about eight years, and self-assessed at roughly C2 level on the CEFR scale.
- Jenny's first language is Hiligaynon, a language of the Philippines, and she also has experience learning English, Filipino, Cebuano, and Filipino Sign Language. At the beginning of the research, she had been learning LSR for seven months, and at the end of the research, she had been learning for an additional seven months, for a total of 14 months. She self-assessed at roughly a C1 level on the CEFR scale for both rounds of the research.
- Alvin speaks Cantonese as his first language, and has experience learning English and Mandarin. He has no previous experience in learning a sign language other than LSR. At the beginning of the research, he had been learning LSR for about 2.5 months, and self-assessed at roughly a B1 level on the CEFR scale. At the time of the second round of research, he had been learning for an additional seven

months, or a total of 9.5 months, and self-assessed at roughly a B2 level on the CEFR scale.

- Fay speaks Cantonese as her first language, and has experience learning English and Mandarin. She has no previous experience in learning a sign language other than LSR. At the beginning of the research, she had been learning LSR for about 2.5 months, and self-assessed at roughly a B2 level on the CEFR scale. At the time of the second round of research, she had been learning for an additional seven months, or a total of 9.5 months, and self-assessed at roughly a C1 level on the CEFR scale.

The beginning learners (Alvin, Fay, and Jenny) completed the tasks twice, seven months apart, to see if there was a change in the way they used communication strategies after becoming more proficient in the language. The two advanced learners (Rachel and Ionuț) only completed the tasks once, as the change in their proficiency level was expected to be less drastic, and therefore not worth the trouble to try to evaluate.

Beforehand, I asked the learners to fill out a survey (see Appendix A) which asked about their language learning background, and any languages that might have some influence on their signing. The survey also listed a series of "Can-Do" statements (adapted from Orwig 2013) and asked the learners to self-assess their proficiency in Romanian Sign Language. The participants put a check mark in one of three columns for each statement (showing whether their language skills were "barely at this level", "sometimes at this level, but not always", or "almost always at this level"). This part of the survey gave a starting level of proficiency for each learner. These results were tallied and converted to a number score (each check in the third column— "almost always at this level"—was given a point). Therefore, the learners' proficiency could be represented by a number that ranged from 0 points to a possible 35 points. In this way, their proficiency could be approximately compared to each other. Scores were based on the CEFR scale.

Based on where each question on the assessment correlated to the CEFR scale and the possible score for each question, a score between 0 and 5 was scored as A1, while 6-10 would be an A2. A score of 11-16 was B1, while a score of 17-22 was B2. Lastly, a score of 23-29 was C1, and a score of 30-35 was C2. The three learners who participated in the second round of tasks also filled out the self-assessment before their second round of research, to show any changes in proficiency between rounds. The learner's proficiency scores were as shown in Table 1. It should be noted that Jenny's self-assessment of her LSR ability was the same in Round 2 as it was in Round 1. In fact, this matched my subjective assessment that Jenny's language ability had not changed much during that time, while Alvin and Fay's had increased.

Table 1: Learner Proficiency Scores

Learner	Round 1	Round 2
Alvin	12	22
Fay	19	26
Jenny	28	28
Ionuț	31	N/A
Rachel	35	N/A

2.3 Research tasks

Learners were presented with two different tasks. The first was a structured task: the learner was given a list of 10 English words (see Appendix B) of varying difficulty, with a mixture of concrete and abstract concepts. (Since some of the learners do not speak English as their first language, each learner was given time to look over the words and ask questions about the meanings of the words, if they did not understand something.) They were then asked to play a game where they interacted with a Deaf native signer and

tried to get them to provide the sign for the target word that the learner had read on the list. The only restriction was that the learner could not use the direct Romanian Sign Language equivalent for the English word on the list. Both the learner and the native signer were present as the instructions were given. These instructions were also written in the consent form that the participants filled out beforehand (see Appendix D). In order to maintain a similar situation for each learner, each learner was given a different set of words, so that the native signers would not go through the same list with two different learners, and therefore already know the words for the second learner.

The second task involved the learner choosing a video from a list of video descriptions. These included some videos with no words at all, and others with English speakers, ranging from very simple to complex topics. Simple videos included wordless animations or a telling of the Goldilocks story, while the more complex videos showed someone talking about topics such as personality tests, forgiveness, or cholera. All of the videos were between 1.5 – 4 minutes long. See Appendix C for the list of video descriptions. The learner was asked to choose a video that was of intermediate difficulty for them—they thought they could talk about most of it without help, but not all of it. The learner then privately watched the video. They were allowed to change their mind during or after watching the video, and choose a new video, if they thought the video was too difficult or too easy to describe. The learner then described the video to the native signer and got help from the native signer as needed. In order to maintain a similar situation for each learner, learners were not allowed to choose videos that the native signer had already heard about with a previous learner.

Throughout both tasks, I was in the room, but not a part of the interactions. All of the tasks were filmed, showing both the learner and the native signer together on screen. After each filmed session, there were two follow-up interviews to examine the videos of the sessions—first, an interview was held with both the learner and the native signer present, watching the videos of the task. The native signer was asked to stop the playback

whenever they saw something on the video that they didn't understand, or which was not Romanian Sign Language. The learner was then asked what they were trying to say in that section, and if they were using a different language. This procedure was used to determine if the learner had influence from other languages in their communication attempts—whether from a spoken language or another sign language.

The second interview was conducted with only the learner, asking them for the reasoning behind each strategy that they used (for example: "You switched from describing the way the person looks to miming how they act. Why did you switch?"). I later coded and analyzed to this information see if there were patterns in the mental processes that the learners used to choose communication strategies.

The video for each task was annotated in ELAN[1]—a computer program created for linguistic analysis (Wittenburg et al. 2006). The annotations identified each time that a communication strategy was used, as well as the type of strategy and the learner's reasons for choosing that strategy.

2.4 Transcription explanation

Unless otherwise noted, the transcriptions in the examples given below are translated from Romanian Sign Language. Other languages are marked in subscripts with brackets. Words written in all-caps are glosses of a sign, following the standard sign language glossing rules.

[1] Created by the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Language Archive, Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Can be found at https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/

2.5 Coding for strategy types

After the research videos had been recorded and checked with the native signer and the learner, I compiled a list of strategies (listed below) based on the videos. In order to keep the analysis free from bias, I waited until after the tasks to compile the list, so that my analysis would be based on what I saw in the data, and not on the strategies I had been expecting to see prior to completing the research.

I also categorized the strategies by type of strategy: "achievement" or avoidance". This data also includes a third category—confirmation-- which I added because several of the strategies did not fit into either the achievement or the avoidance category. For the purpose of this research, a confirmation strategy is defined as a strategy used to make sure that the learner and interlocutor have understood each other correctly and are thinking about the same concept. For example, the "Clarify Meaning" strategy (see definitions list below) allows the learner to confirm that the meaning they have understood for a certain sign is also what the interlocutor understands the meaning to be. This strategy is a way for the learner to make sure they do not misunderstand the interlocutor by thinking in a different direction.

The following is a list of all of definitions for all of the different communication strategies found in the data.

2.5.1 Achievement strategies

Lexical Circumlocution:

Describing the target word using lexical words from the target language.

(1) Target word is "church":

Jenny: *It's the place where people, Christians, go on Sunday.*

Classifier (CL) Circumlocution:

Describing the target word using sign language classifiers

(2) Target word is “pasta”:

Jenny used size and shape classifiers to show that she was talking about something long and thin.

Repetition:

Repeating something that the learner has already said, without adding new information or changing the way they said it.

(3) Target word is “Christmas”:

Rachel: *Jesus’ birth*

NS2: (No response)

Rachel: *Jesus’ birth*

Substitution:

Replacing the target sign with another sign that has a similar meaning.

(4) Target word is “trust”:

Ionuț: *Faith.*

Mime:

Acting out a concept with the body, without using any linguistic content.

(5)

When Alvin tried to communicate “stamp”, he began by acting out writing a letter and folding it up to put it in an envelope. He did not use any lexical signs or sign language classifiers.

Setting up a situation:

Using an imagined situation to lead the interlocutor to the target word.

(6) Target word is “guess”:

Rachel: *Here’s another example. At school, they give you a test, you know? It has a multiple-choice question. But what do you do if you look at the test and you don’t know the answer? There’s a list of choices: A, B, C, and D. What do you do, do you give up? Or…*

Personal Knowledge:

Providing an example that relates to the other person’s life.

(7) Target word is “surprise”

Note: both the interlocutor and the learner had been invited to a surprise baby shower that weekend:

Alvin: *On Saturday, there is a party for Daniela. Daniela doesn’t know. When Daniela opens the doors and goes inside, how will she feel?*

NS2: *Surprised.*

Connect to current situation:

Referring to the current situation in order to signal the target word.

(8) Target word is “guess”:

Rachel: *Right now, in this game—I’m signing, and what are you doing?*

Object:

Referring to an object or person that is present.

(9) Target word is “chair”:

Alvin: *He sits on this (taps on the chair).*

Comparison:

Comparison of the target word with an opposite term. For example, Rachel compared the target word, “optimistic”, with “pessimistic”.

(10) Target word is “optimistic”:

Rachel: *Let’s do a comparison. One person is always upset and says, “I’m going to fail. I won’t succeed.” The other person says, “I can do this! It’s not a problem. I can learn.” The second person is…?*

List of Examples:

Use of a list of examples within the same category as the target word. Alternatively, if the target word is itself a category, use of a list of examples found within that category.

(11) Target word is “weather”:

Fay: *For example, today it’s sunny. Today it’s snowing. Today it’s windy. What’s the word?*

Substitution of a word from another language:

Inserting a word from another language in the place of the target word. In this research, this was done in three ways: using sign language fingerspelling to spell out the target word in a spoken language, using a sign from another sign language, and using their voice to say a word from a spoken language.

(12) Target word is “class”:

Ionuț: *I don’t know the sign; the Romanian word is C-L-A-S-A.*

(13) Target word is “boyfriend/girlfriend”:

Ionuț: [SWEETHEART]$_{\text{Kenyan Sign Language}}$

NS2: SWEETHEART

(14) Target word is “opposite”:

NS1: Don’t like? Don’t like.

Alvin: [Opposite]$_{\text{English}}$

Fill in the blank:

Saying a sentence and inserting a “blank” in place of the target word.

(15) Target word is “weather”:

Fay: *What do you say, “Today, blank is hot.”*

Asking for a synonym:

After the interlocutor has given the learner a possible sign to fit their target word, and it is not exactly what the learner is aiming for, asking for another sign with similar meaning.

(16) Target word is “guess”:

NS2: *Choose.*

Rachel: *Choose? Do you know another sign for choose?*

Slight change to sign:

Changing a previous attempt at a word that the interlocutor did not understand, in the hopes that the interlocutor will understand if the attempt is closer to the correct word. In this example, Alvin tried to sign “party”, but got the handshape wrong. When the native signer did not understand, he changed to a new handshape, thinking that maybe that would be more helpful.

(17)

Alvin: *They were at a PARTY*$_{\textit{with Y handshape}}$

NS1: *I’m sorry, I don’t understand PARTY*$_{\textit{with Y handshape}}$

Alvin: *PARTY*$_{\textit{with S handshape}}$

Corralling:

Working from information that the interlocutor has given them and giving hints to guide the interlocutor closer to the target word.

(18) Target word is “eager”:

NS3: *A whole lot. I want to eat a whole lot.*

Fay: *Or, I want to draw a whole lot?*

NS3: *That means the same as “much”, “so much”.*

Fay: *No, I really WANT.*

Guessing:

Making a guess at what a word would be in a language known to the interlocutor (note: in this example, the learner guessed what the Romanian word would be for the target word, using her knowledge of the English word and Romanian grammar).

(19) Target word is “personality”:

Rachel: *I don’t know the Romanian word, maybe P-E-R-S-O-N-A-L-I-T-A-T-E?*

2.5.2 Avoidance strategies

Message abandonment:

Abandonment of all attempts to talk about a subject or use a word.

(20) When trying to find the sign for “famous”, Jenny made several attempts to elicit the sign, and then said the following:

Jenny: *OK, moving on, next word. This is hard!*

2.5.3 Confirmation strategies

Clarify meaning:

Summarizing the meaning of a newly-learned word to make sure the learner understands the same meaning as the interlocutor.

(20) Target word is “stress”:

NS3: *Do you mean “busy”?*

Fay: *Busy?*

NS3: *Busy. I have a list of things to do. I have to do school work, teach, pick up the kids. I’m busy. It’s like this other sign, “occupied”. I’m not relaxed, I’m working hard because I’m busy.*

Fay: *Is “busy” a feeling? It’s something I feel?*

Clarify in another context:

Attempting to put a newly learned word into a different context to fully understand its meaning, or to make sure it is the sign the learner is seeking. In this example, Fay has attempted to describe the concept of “eager”, and NS3 is guessing at what she means by giving her the sign for “prefer”.

(21) Target word is "eager":

NS3: *“Prefer”? I prefer chocolate.*

Fay: *Can I “prefer” to draw?*

NS3: *Yeah!*

Check for understanding:

Checking to make sure the interlocutor understood what was just said.

(22)

Alvin: *He asks him why he wants pills. Do you understand me?*

NS1: *A little bit. Please say it again.*

Some of these categories require further clarification. If the learner used a sign language which was not LSR, this was coded as a strategy based on another sign language only if the sign used was the equivalent of the concept they were trying to elicit. For example, when Ionuț was trying to elicit the sign for "sweetheart", he simply used the sign for "sweetheart" in Kenyan Sign Language, in the hopes that the interlocutor would understand it and give him the equivalent sign in LSR. This was counted as a strategy based on another sign language because the learner consciously substituted one sign language for another. However, when Jenny was trying to discover the sign for "cactus", at one point she said, "It's a special plant," and used the Filipino Sign Language (FSL) sign for "special." Although the learner used a word from another sign language, this was counted as a lexical circumlocution instead of a strategy based on another sign language. In this situation, the goal of the learner's strategy was to describe the word, and the word from another language being inserted was not necessarily intentional.

2.6 Some problems that were encountered

Initially, there were some problems with this research because of misunderstandings between the participants and me. One participant was unclear on the instructions for the first task and had to ask a few times for clarification during the beginning of the first task. This same participant kept accidentally using the Romanian sign, which they were supposed to avoid, but his data was still used because he only did this after first using at

least one other strategy. Another participant mentioned afterward that they had misunderstood and thought they were not supposed to use any LSR at all, which was why they used so much International Sign. However, this participant did still use quite a bit of LSR—perhaps, as the trial went on, they forgot what they thought they were supposed to be doing. Also, I only counted use of another language as a foreign language strategy when it was used to specifically replace the target word with a word from another language—when it was clear that the use of the foreign language was the strategy that they were using. In light of this coding decision, this participant's data can still be useful. A future rendition of this research should approach the instructions differently—perhaps telling the learner specifically to pretend that they have forgotten the sign for the target word or do not know it.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the trials done in this study, organized from several different perspectives. Section 3.1 approaches the data by looking at the most commonly used CSs. The most commonly used CS was Lexical Circumlocution. Section 3.2 looks at the relationship between the learner's proficiency score and the variety in the CSs they used during the study. Learners with higher proficiency in the language tended to have slightly higher variation in the communication strategies they chose to use. Section 3.3 compares the "base languages," or the languages which each strategy uses to communicate. The base language that was most commonly used for all of the different strategies was Romanian Sign Language (LSR). Section 3.4 looks at the relationship between the learner's proficiency score and the percentage of LSR-based strategies that they used. Unexpectedly, beginning learners used more LSR-based strategies than the advanced learners. Section 3.5 considers the broad category for each CS. Achievement strategies were by far the most common type of communication strategy used in the present study. Section 3.6 presents the last achievement strategies that were used before successfully communicating the target word. It also distinguishes between last-used strategies before successful communication (the most common of which was Lexical Circumlocution), and the percentage of success for last-used strategies (the most successful strategy from this perspective was Mime).

3.1 Most common communication strategies

Table 2 shows the counts of each strategy that Alvin used in Round 1 and 2 (R1 and R2), Tasks 1 and 2 (T1 and T2).

Table 2: Alvin's Strategy Distribution

Alvin's CSs	R1T1	R1T2	R2T1	R2T2	Total
Lexical Circumlocution	21	3	9		33
Classifier Circumlocution	6	1	3	1	11
Repetition	11	6	4		21
Mime	4		3		7
Comparison	4		7		11
Personal Example	1		4		5
Clarify Meaning	6	1	1		8
Substitute Word from Another Language	1				1
Setting Up a Situation	2	1	1		4
List of Examples			2		2
Connect to Current Situation			2		2
Substitute Sign				1	1
Message Abandonment			1		1
Object		1	1		2
Checking for Understanding		4			4
Total	56	17	38	2	113

Figures 1-4 show the counts of each strategy that Alvin used in each individual task.

Figure 1: Alvin's CS Distribution R1T1

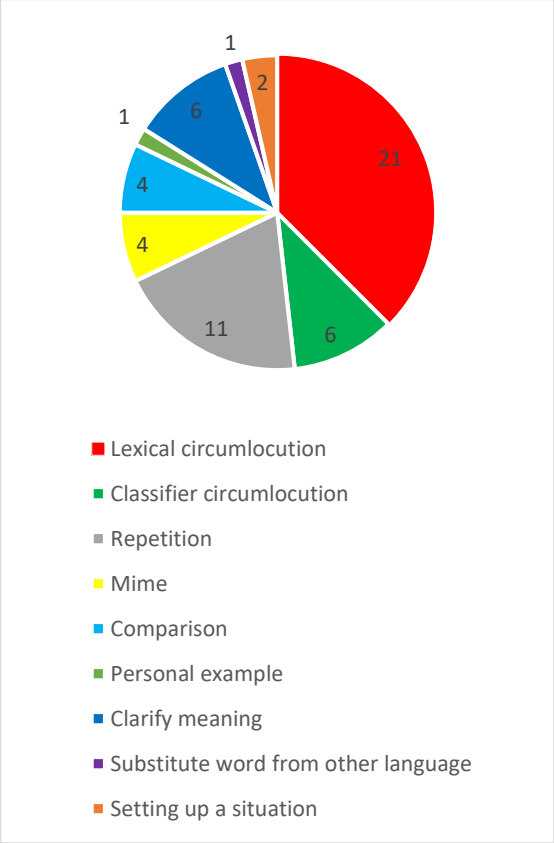


Figure 2: Alvin's CS Distribution R1T2

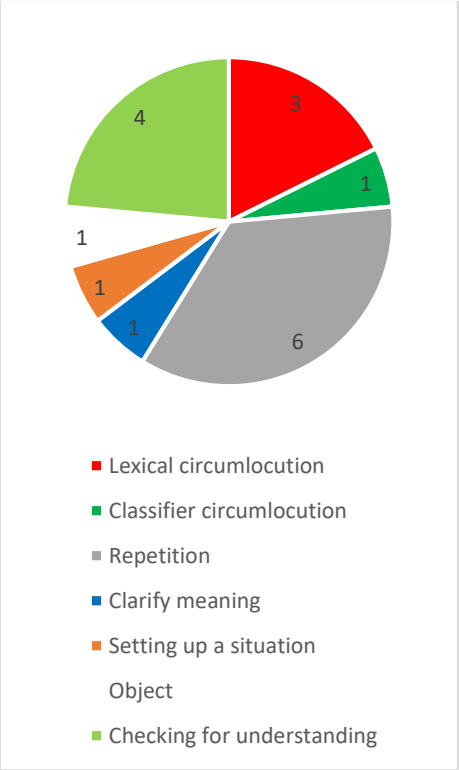


Figure 3: Alvin's CS Distribution R2T1

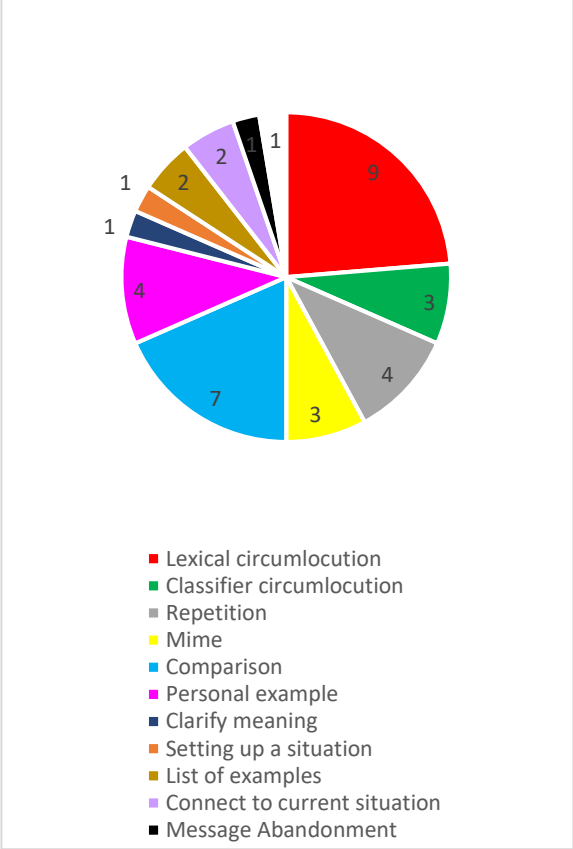
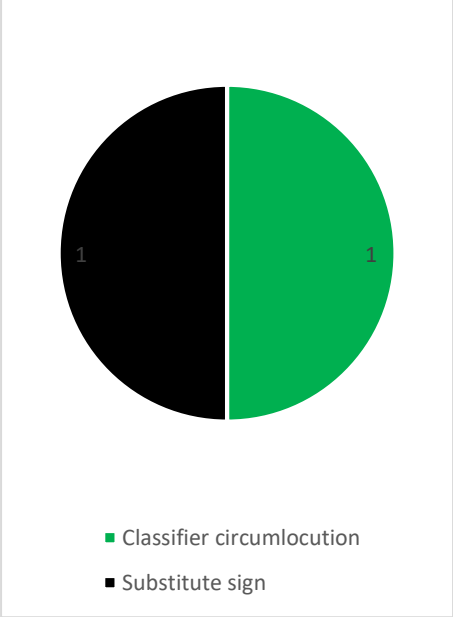


Figure 4: Alvin's CS Distribution R2T2



Alvin's most used strategy was Lexical Circumlocution—he used this strategy 33 times throughout the study. However, if both tasks are viewed separately, he used Lexical Circumlocution more than any other strategy in both instances of Task 1, but not in either instance of Task 2. His most common strategy in R1T2 was Repetition (used six times), and during R2T2, he used Classifier Circumlocution and Substitution of a Sign equally (one time each).

Table 3 shows the counts of each strategy that Fay used in all four tasks.

Table 3: Fay's Strategy Distribution

Fay's CSs	R1T1	R1T2	R2T1	R2T2	Total
Lexical Circumlocution	10	1	7	2	20
Classifier Circumlocution		2	1	5	8
Repetition	5		11		16
Mime				1	1
Comparison			9		9
Personal Example	2		2		4
Corralling	1		1		2
Clarify Meaning	4		5		11
Setting Up a Situation	5		13		18
Substitute Word from Another Language	2	2			4
List of Examples	2				2
Fill in the Blank	1				1
Clarify in Another Context	3		2		4
Substitute Sign				1	1
Object		1			1
Checking for Understanding				1	1
Total	36	6	51	10	103

Figures 5-8 show the counts of each strategy that Fay used in each individual task.

Figure 5: Fay's CS Distribution R1T1

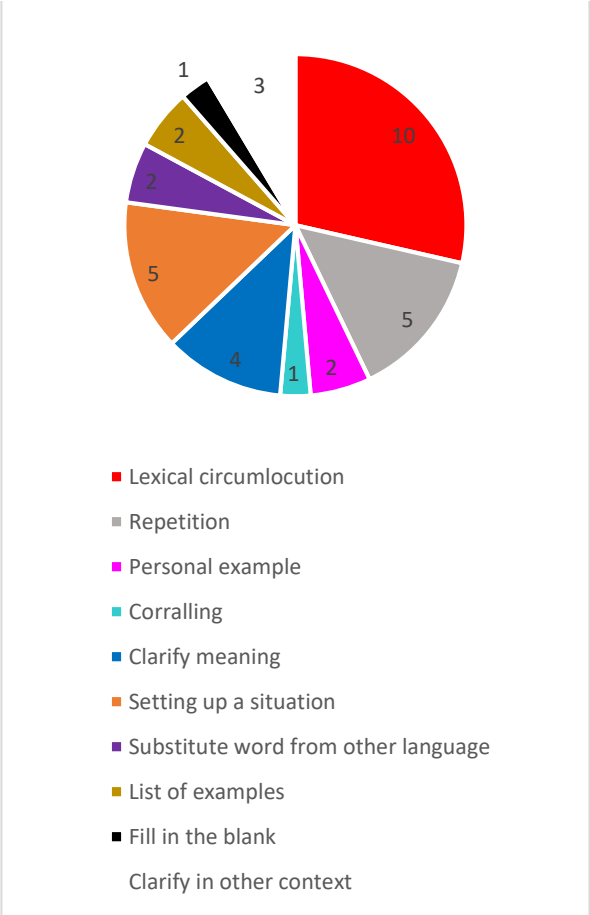


Figure 6: Fay's CS Distribution R1T2

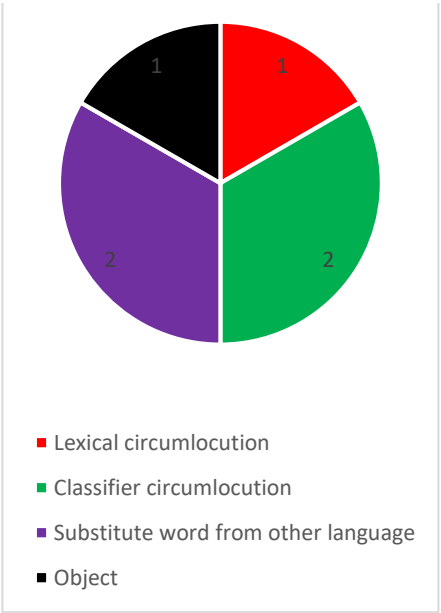


Figure 7: Fay's CS Distribution R2T1

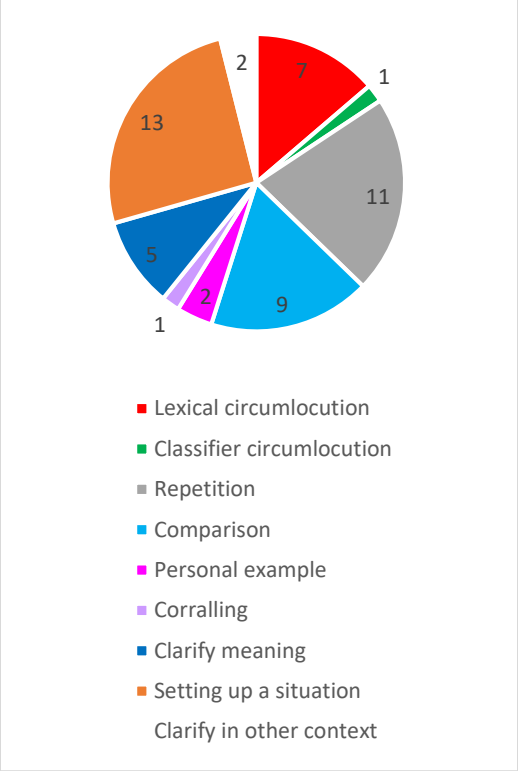
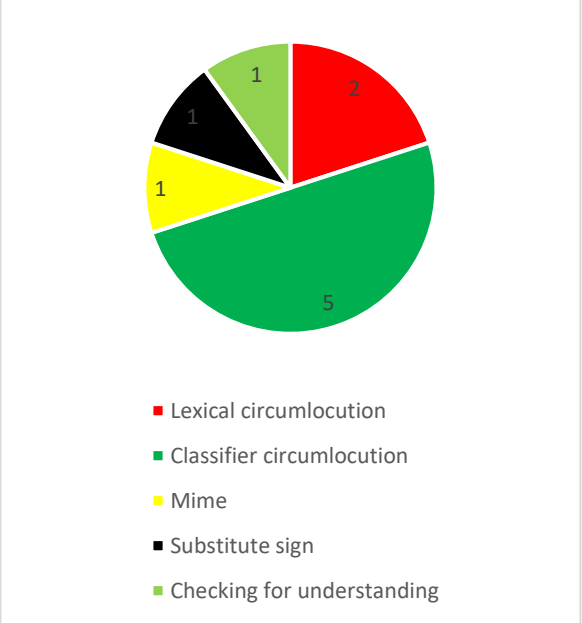


Figure 8: Fay's CS Distribution R2T2



Fay's most commonly used strategy was Lexical Circumlocution—she used this strategy 20 times throughout the study. However, if both tasks are viewed separately, she only used this strategy more than other strategies during Round 1 Task 1. In R2T1, she used Setting up a Situation the most. In R1T2, she used both Classifier Circumlocution and Substitution of a Word from Another Language both twice, and in R2T2, she used Classifier Circumlocution the most.

Table 4 shows the counts of each strategy that Jenny used in all four tasks.

Table 4: Jenny's Strategy Distribution

Jenny's CSs	R1T1	R1T2	R2T1	R2T2	Total
Lexical Circumlocution	19	2	11		32
Classifier Circumlocution	4	1	6		11
Repetition	5		5		10
Mime	1		5		6
Personal Example			2		2
Corralling			1		1
Setting Up a Situation			10		10
Substitute Word from Another Language	2	1	1	1	5
List of Examples			2		2
Substitute Sign	1				1
Asking for a Synonym	1				1
Message Abandonment			1		1
Total	33	4	44	1	82

Figures 9-12 show the counts of each strategy that Jenny used in each individual task.

Figure 9: Jenny's CS Distribution R1T1

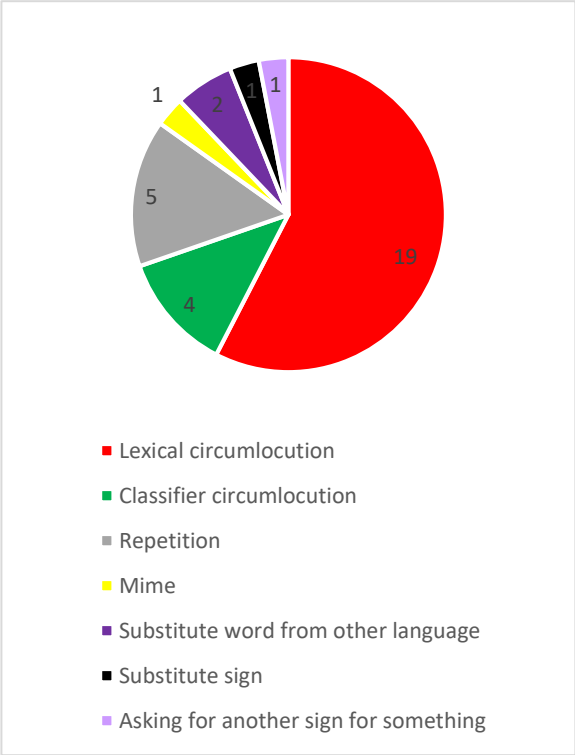


Figure 10: Jenny's CS Distribution R1T2

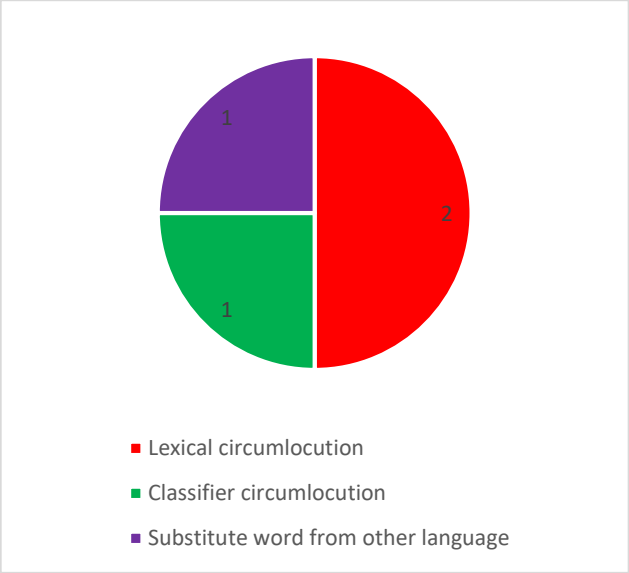


Figure 11: Jenny's CS Distribution R2T1

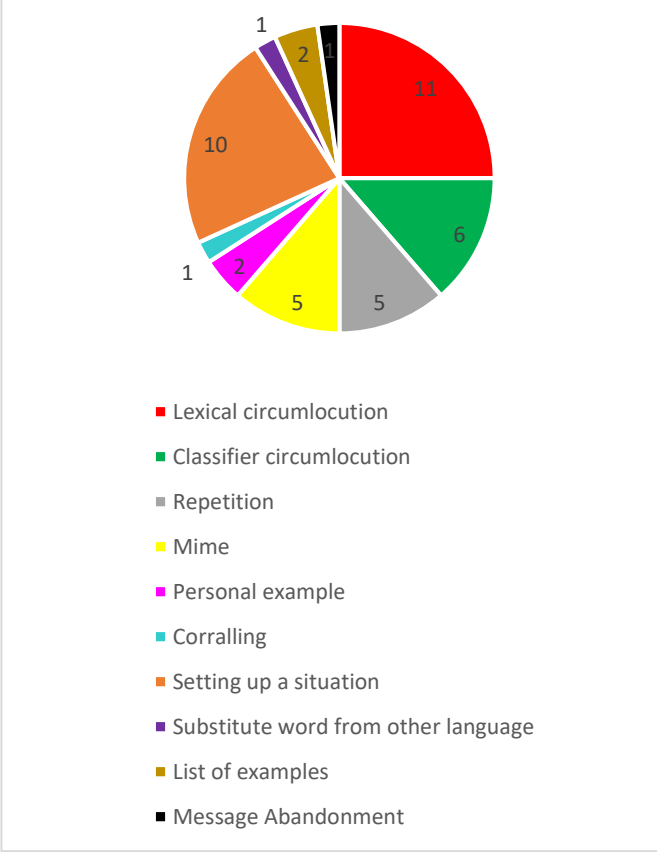
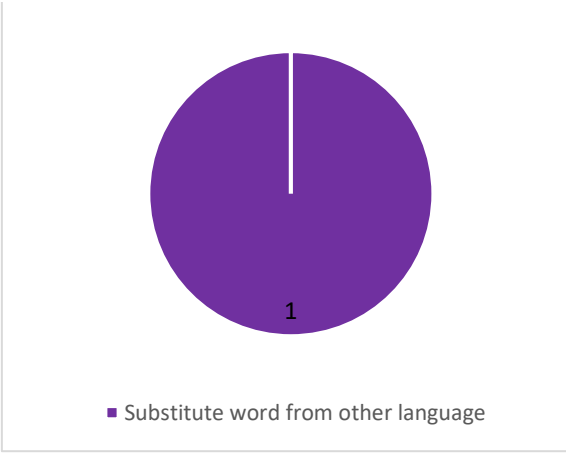


Figure 12: Jenny's CS Distribution R2T2



Jenny's most common strategy was Lexical Circumlocution—she used this strategy 32 times throughout the four tasks. She also used it the most in both tasks of Round 1, and R2T1. In R2T2, the only strategy she used was Fingerspelling (one time).

Table 5 shows the counts of each strategy that Ionuț used in both tasks. Since Ionuț was one of the advanced learners, he did not participate in a second round, and therefore had a total of only two tasks.

Table 5: Ionuț's Strategy Distribution

Ionuț's CSs	Task 1	Task 2	Total
Lexical Circumlocution	6	1	7
Classifier Circumlocution	1		1
Mime	2		2
Personal Example	1		1
Setting Up a Situation	1	1	2
Substituting a Word from Another Language	7	1	8
List of Examples	1		1
Substitute Sign	1		1
Total	20	3	23

Figures 13-14 show the counts of each strategy that Ionuț used in each individual task.

Figure 13: Ionuț's CS Distribution T1

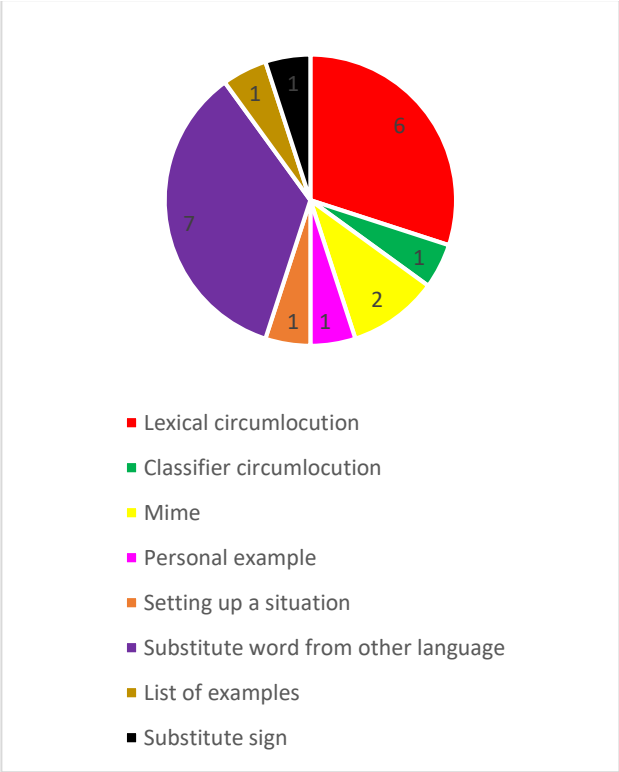
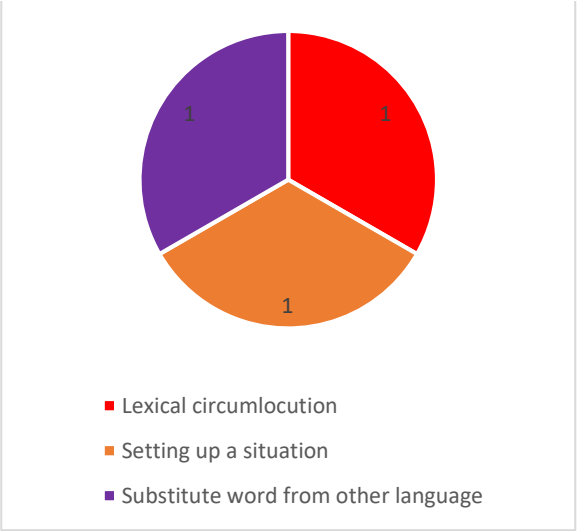


Figure 14: Ionuț's CS Distribution T2



Ionuț's most commonly used strategy was Substituting a Word from Another Language. He used this strategy eight times throughout the two tasks. He used Lexical Circumlocution almost as much (seven times throughout the two tasks). In Task 1, he also used this strategy the most (seven times). However, in Task 2, he used three different strategies (Lexical Circumlocution, Setting up a Situation, and Substituting a Word from Another Language) equally (once each).

Table 6 shows the counts of each strategy that Rachel used in both tasks. Since Rachel was one of the advanced learners, she did not participate in a second round, and therefore had a total of only two tasks.

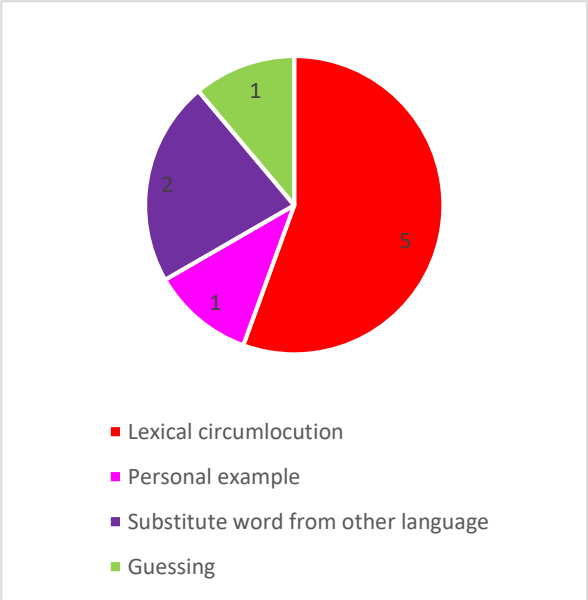
Table 6: Rachel's Strategy Distribution

Rachel's CSs	Task 1	Task 2	Total
Lexical circumlocution	4	5	9
Classifier circumlocution	3		3
Repetition	1		1
Mime	1		1
Comparison	1		1
Personal example	1	1	2
Setting up a situation	6		6
Substitute word from another language	3	2	5
List of examples	1		1
Guessing		1	1
Connect to current situation	2		2
Asking for a synonym	1		1
Total	24	9	33

Figures 15-16 show the counts of each strategy that Rachel used in each individual task.

Figure 15: Rachel's CS Distribution T1

Figure 16: Rachel's CS Distribution T2



Rachel's most common strategy was Lexical Circumlocution—she used this strategy nine times throughout the two tasks. However, she only used this strategy the most in Task 2—in Task 1, she used the Setting up a Situation strategy the most (six times).

Table 7: Numbers & percentages of all CSs used in each task shows the numbers and percentages for each communication strategy used by all of the participants in each task.

Table 7: Numbers & percentages of all CSs used in each task

CS	R1T1	%	R1T2	%	R2T1	%	R2T2	%	Total	%
Lexical Circumlocution	60	36%	12	32%	27	20%	2	15%	101	28.8%
Classifier Circumlocution	14	8%	4	11%	10	7%	6	46%	34	9.7%
Repetition	21	13%	6	16%	20	15%			47	13.4%
Mime	8	5%			8	6%	1	8%	17	4.8%
Comparison	5	3%			16	12%			21	6.0%
Personal Example	5	3%	1	3%	8	6%			14	4.0%
Clarify Meaning	11	7%	1	3%	6	4%			18	5.1%
Corralling	1	1%			2	1%			3	0.9%
Substitute Word from Another Language	15	9%	4	11%	3	2%	1	8%	23	6.6%
Setting Up a Situation	14	8%	2	5%	24	18%			40	11.4%
List of Examples	4	2%			4	3%			8	2.3%
Fill in the Blank	1	1%							1	0.3%
Clarify in Another Context	2	1%			2	1%			4	1.1%
Connect to Current Situation	3	2%			2	1%			5	1.4%
Substitute Sign	1	1%					2	15%	3	0.9%
Message Abandonment					2	1%			2	0.6%
Object					1	1%			1	0.3%
Checking for Understanding			4	11%			1	8%	5	1.4%
Asking for a Synonym	1	1%							1	0.3%
Object			2	5%					2	0.6%
Guessing			1	3%					1	0.3%
Total	166	100%	37	100%	135	100%	13	100%	351	100.0%

In 3 of the 4 tasks (R1T1 and R1T2, and R2T1), Lexical Circumlocution was the most commonly used CS (used 36% of the time in R1T1, 32% of the time in R1T2, and 20% of the time in R2T1). In R2T2, Classifier Circumlocution was used the most at 46%, while Lexical Circumlocution was used only 15% of the time. Looking at all eight instances of Task 1 (both rounds for each of the three beginning learners, and one round for each of the advanced learners), in five of these, Lexical Circumlocution was used the most (see Tables 2-6). Lexical Circumlocution was also used the most throughout all of the research (28.8% of the time).

3.2 Relationship between proficiency score and variety in the use of communication strategies

The amount of variation a learner used in a task was calculated by dividing the number of distinct strategies the learner used in the task by the total number of times they used a communication strategy. This calculation produces a percentage that indicates the variety of strategies they used; a higher percentage indicates more variety. Particularly in the second tasks, the learners only used a few different types of strategies—however, there were also far fewer total strategies used in the second tasks. Figure 17 shows the relationship between the learners' proficiency scores and the variation in the communication strategies they chose to use in Task 1. The trend line in the graph uses an Excel function. As Figure 17 shows, learners with more proficiency tended to have more variety in the CSs they chose to use during Task 1. One specific example of this is Alvin, who in R1T1 used a new CS 16.07% of the time, and in R2T1 used a new CS 31.58% of the time.

Figure 17: Relationship between Proficiency Score and Variations in CSs- Task 1

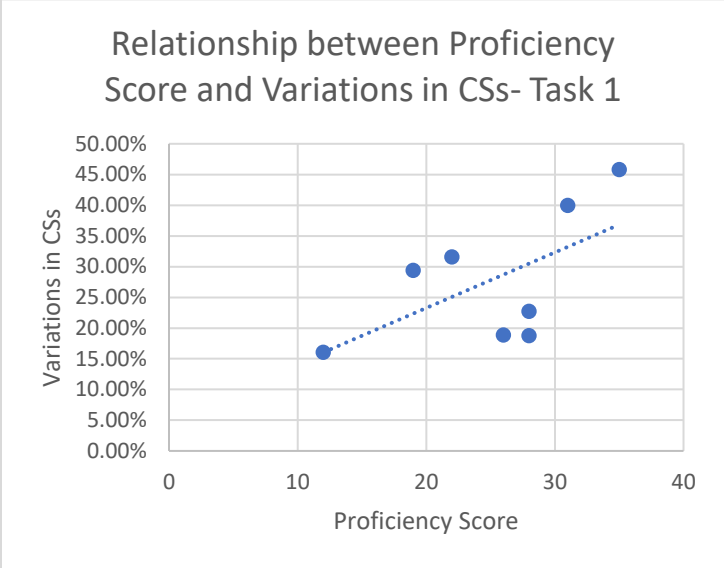


Table 8 shows the same thing in more detail: the proficiency score, total number of CSs, and variation percentage in each task for all of the individual participants.

Table 8: Proficiency Score vs. Variation of CSs

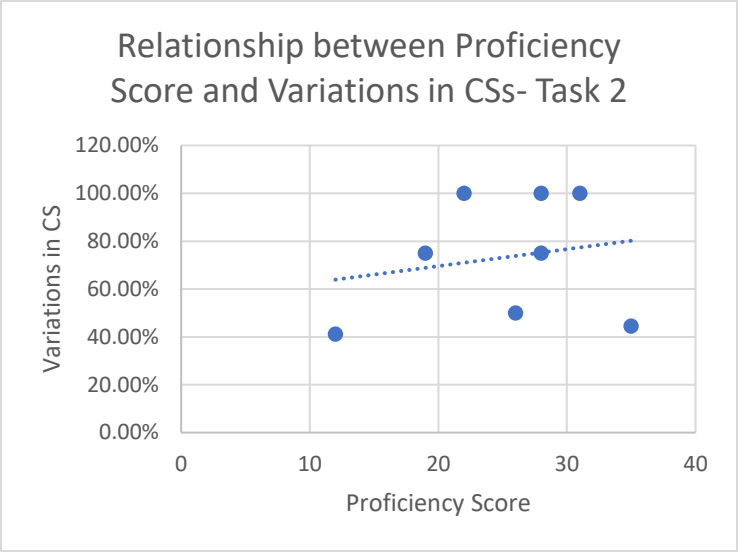
		Task 1			Task 2		
	Proficiency Score	Total # of CSs	# of Different CSs	Variation %	Total # of CSs	# of Different CSs	Variation %
Alvin Round 1	12	56	9	16.07%	17	7	41.17%
Alvin Round 2	22	38	12	31.58%	2	2	100%
Fay Round 1	19	34	10	29.41%	4	3	75%
Fay Round 2	26	53	10	18.87%	10	5	50%
Jenny Round 1	28	32	6	18.75%	4	3	75%
Jenny Round 2	28	44	10	22.73%	1	1	100%
Ionuț	31	20	8	40%	3	3	100%
Rachel	35	24	11	45.83%	9	4	44.44%

In Task 1, there is a tendency for the learners with higher proficiency to have more variation in their choice of CS (this can be seen more clearly in Figure 17). Task 2 seemed to result in

more variety than Task 1: all but one participant (Rachel) showed more variation in their choice of CSs during Task 2 than in Task 1.

Figure 18 shows that the relationship between proficiency score and variation in CSs was less clear in Task 2.

Figure 18: Relationship between Proficiency Score and Variations in CSs- Task 2



3.3 Base languages of communication strategies

One of the factors I determined for each communication strategy that the learners used was the language that they used within the strategy. For example, if a learner used LSR to describe the target word, then that strategy would be based in LSR, and if a learner fingerspelled a Romanian word, then Romanian would be the base language of that strategy. The following figures and tables show the breakdown of base languages for each participant in each task. The base languages used were LSR (Romanian Sign Language), KSL (Kenyan Sign Language), FSL (Filipino Sign Language), Romanian, and English. IntSL (International Sign Language) was also used. Of course, not all learners knew all these languages, but all languages are listed in each chart below, to make comparison easier. In addition to these languages, I treated SLCL (sign language classifiers) as a "language"—although this is not a language on its own, I gave it its

own category because many classifiers are similar from one sign language to the next. Therefore, it can be difficult to distinguish which classifiers belong to which language. There were also instances labeled “none” (when the learners used non-linguistic based strategies).

Table 9: Alvin’s Base Languages, R1T1 (NS1)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	43	81%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0
IntSL	0	0
SLCL	6	11%
Romanian	0	0%
English	1	2%
None	3	6%

Figure 19: Alvin’s Base Languages, R1T1 (NS1)

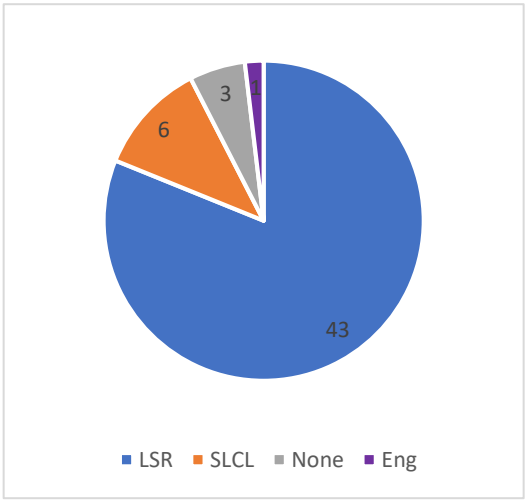


Table 10: Alvin’s Base Languages, R2T1 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	28	88%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	4	13%

Figure 20: Alvin’s Base Languages, R2T1 (NS2)

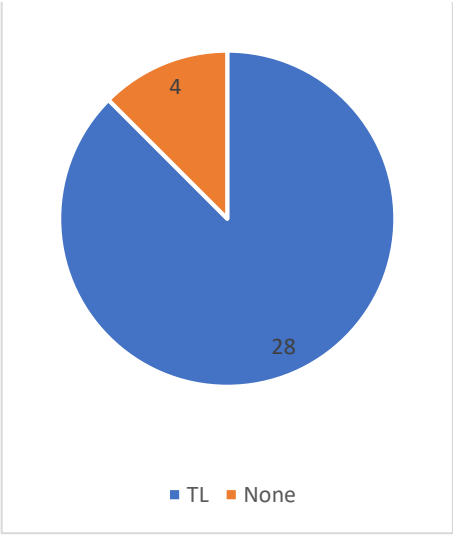


Table 11: Fay's Base Languages, R1T1 (NS3)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	32	91%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	1	3%
English	1	3%
None	0	0%

Figure 21: Fay's Base Languages, R1T1 (NS3)

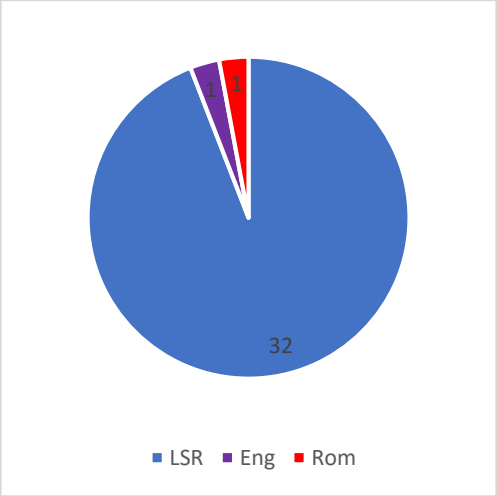


Table 12: Fay's Base Languages, R2T1 (NS3)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	44	94%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	1	2%
Romanian	1	2%
English	1	2%
None	0	0

Figure 22: Fay's Base Languages, R2T1 (NS3)

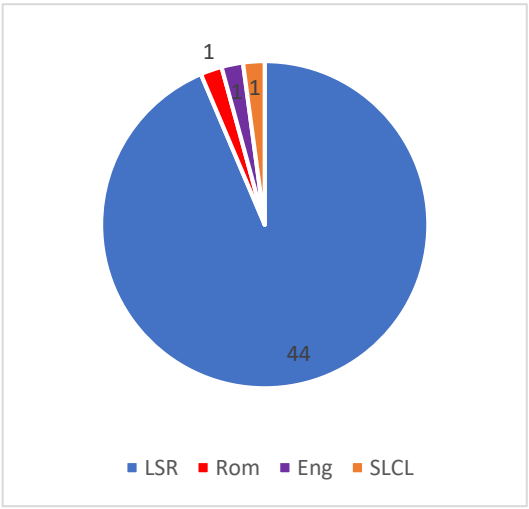


Table 13: Jenny's Base Languages, R1T1 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	25	78%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	1	3%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	4	13%
Romanian	0	0%
English	1	3%
None	1	3%

Figure 23: Jenny's Base Languages, R1T1 (NS2)

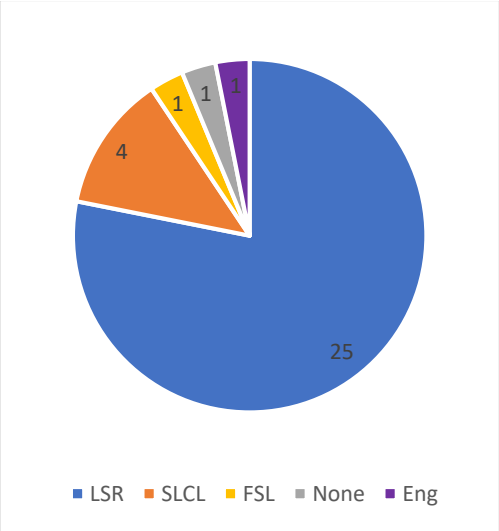


Table 14: Jenny's Base Languages, R2T1 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	33	83%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	1	3%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	6	15%

Figure 24: Jenny's Base Languages, R2T1 (NS2)

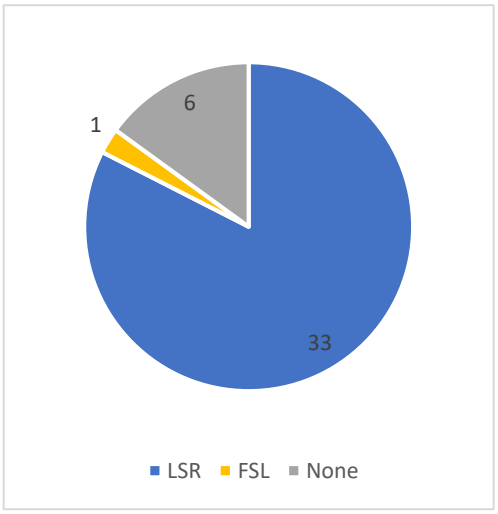


Table 15: Ionuț's Base Languages, T1 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	10	50%
KSL	4	20%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	1	5%
Romanian	3	15%
English	0	0%
None	2	10%

Figure 25: Ionuț's Base Languages, T1 (NS2)

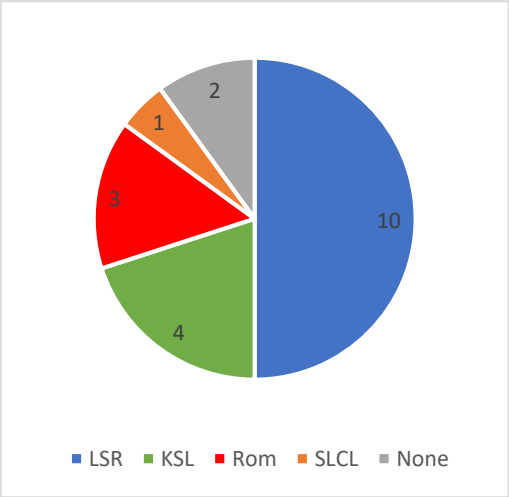
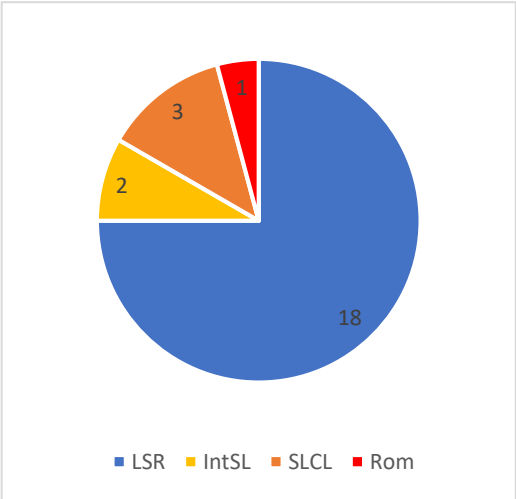


Table 16: Rachel's Base Languages, T1 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	18	72%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	2	8%
SLCL	3	12%
Romanian	1	4%
English	0	0%
None	0	0%

Figure 26: Rachel's Base Languages, T1 (NS2)



As shown in Figures 19—26, the target language (LSR) was the most common language used in strategies throughout Task 1, being used at least 50% of the time for all participants. However, in Task 2, which was less structured and allowed for a more natural situation, LSR

based strategies were less dominant, as shown in Figures 27—34. However, Task 2 also produced fewer CSs—some of the participants only used a CS one or two times throughout the task. Therefore, this greater variety may simply have been a product of the small sample size.

Table 17: Alvin's Base Languages, R1T2 (NS1)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	15	88%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	1	6%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	1	6%

Figure 27: Alvin's Base Languages, R1T2 (NS1)

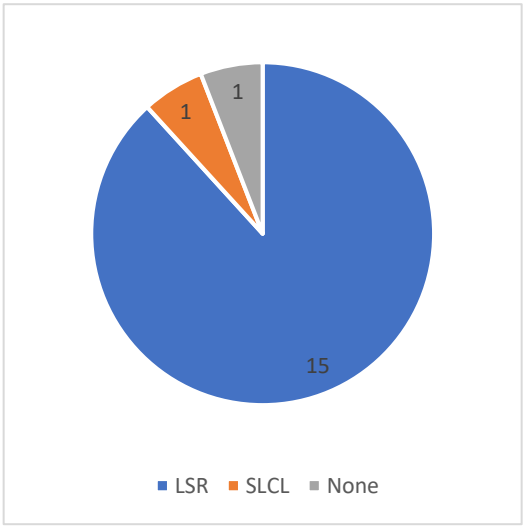


Table 18: Alvin's Base Languages, R2T2 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	1	50%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	1	50%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	0	0%

Figure 28: Alvin's Base Languages, R2T2 (NS2)

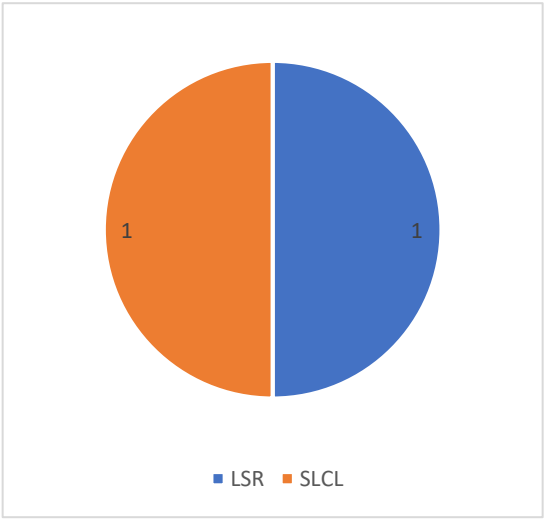


Table 19: Fay's Base Languages, R1T2 (NS3)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	1	33%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	1	33%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	1	33%

Figure 29: Fay's Base Languages, R1T2 (NS3)

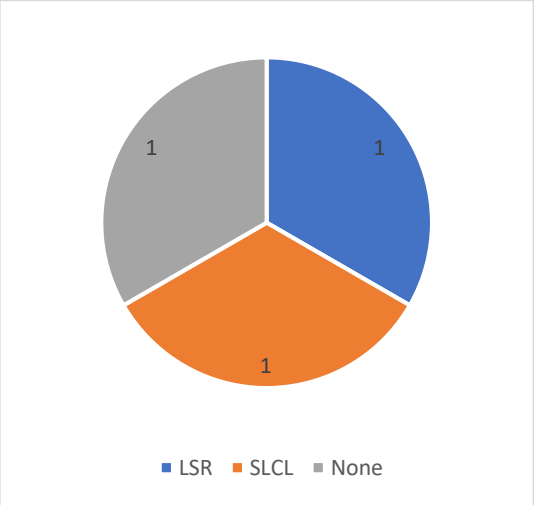


Table 20: Fay's Base Languages, R2T2 (NS3)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	6	86%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	1	14%

Figure 30: Fay's Base Languages, R2T2 (NS3)

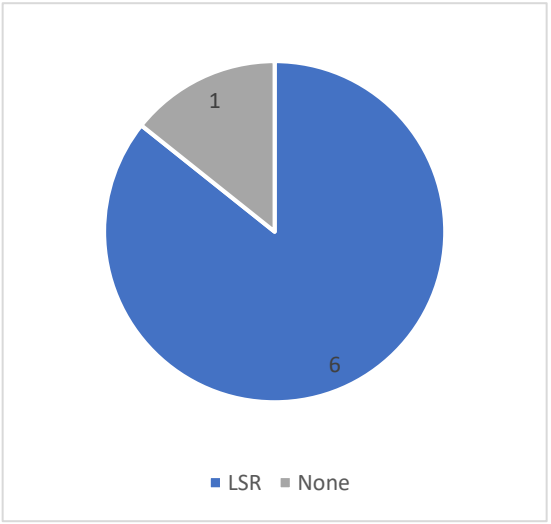


Table 21: Jenny's Base Languages, R1T2 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	2	50%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	1	25%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	1	25%
Romanian	0	0%
English	0	0%
None	0	0%

Figure 31: Jenny's Base Languages, R1T2 (NS2)

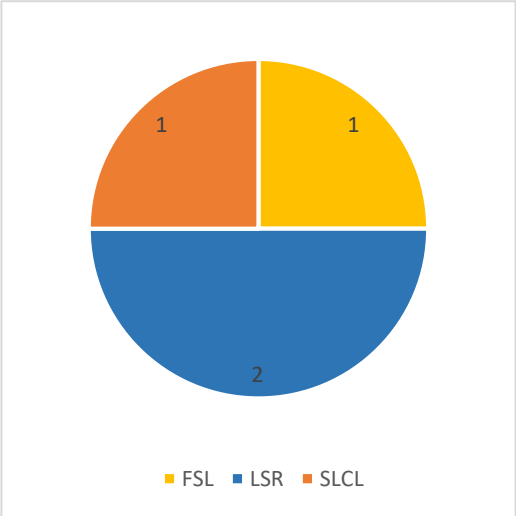


Table 22: Jenny's Base Languages, R2T2 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	0	0%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	1	100%
English	0	0%
None	0	0%

Figure 32: Jenny's Base Languages, R2T2 (NS2)

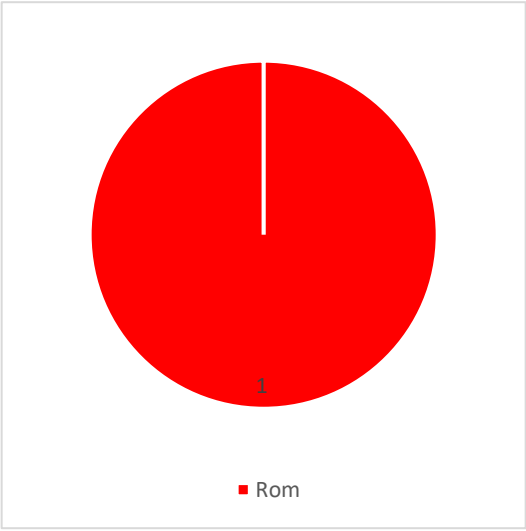


Table 23: Ionuț's Base Languages, T2 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	2	67%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	1	33%
English	0	0%
None	0	0%

Figure 33: Ionuț's Base Languages, T2 (NS2)

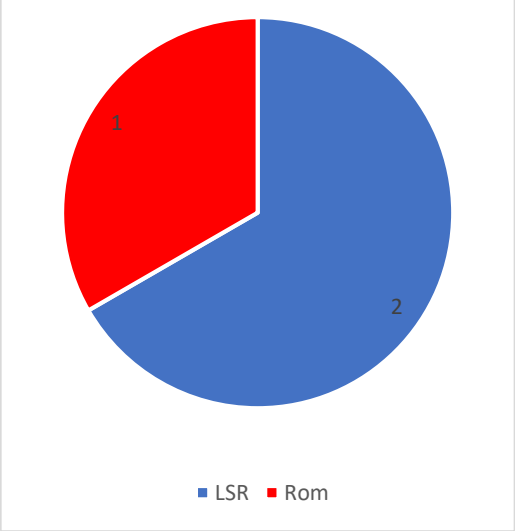
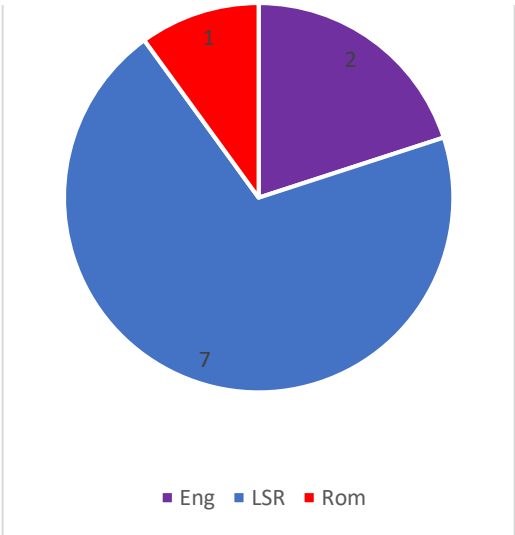


Table 24: Rachel's Base Languages, T2 (NS2)

Base language	# of instances	Percentage used
LSR	7	70%
KSL	0	0%
FSL	0	0%
IntSL	0	0%
SLCL	0	0%
Romanian	1	10%
English	2	20%
None	0	0%

Figure 34: Rachel's Base Languages, T2 (NS2)



As shown in the base language figures, the beginning learners (Alvin, Fay, and Jenny) tended to use more LSR-based strategies than the advanced learners (Ionuț and Rachel).

3.4 Relationship between proficiency score and percentage of LSR-based strategies

Table 25**: Proficiency Score vs. Percentage of LSR-based CSs**shows each participant's proficiency score, as well as the percentage of LSR-based strategies that they used in each task.

Table 25: Proficiency Score vs. Percentage of LSR-based CSs

		% of LSR-based CSs	
	Proficiency Score	Task 1	Task 2
Alvin Round 1	12	79%	88%
Alvin Round 2	22	82%	50%
Fay Round 1	19	94%	25%
Fay Round 2	26	94%	40%
Jenny Round 1	28	78%	50%
Jenny Round 2	28	68%	0%
Ionuț	31	50%	67%
Rachel	35	71%	67%

Table 25 compares the percentage of LSR-based strategies used by each learner in both tasks, from Round 1 to Round 2. It shows that in Task 1, the three beginning learners (Alvin, Fay, and Jenny) used a higher percentage of LSR-based strategies than the two advanced learners (Ionuț & Rachel).

Looking only at the first task (which had far more examples of strategies than the second task), the learner with the lowest proficiency score (Alvin) used 79% LSR-based strategies in Round 1 and 82% in Round 2, while the learner with the highest proficiency score (Rachel) used 71% LSR-based strategies. Figure 35 and Figure 36 show the relationship between proficiency score and the percentage of LSR strategies used (this includes 8 data points—2 rounds each for the three beginning learners, and one each for the two advanced learners).

Figure 35: Proficiency Score vs. Percentage of LSR-based Strategies, Task 1

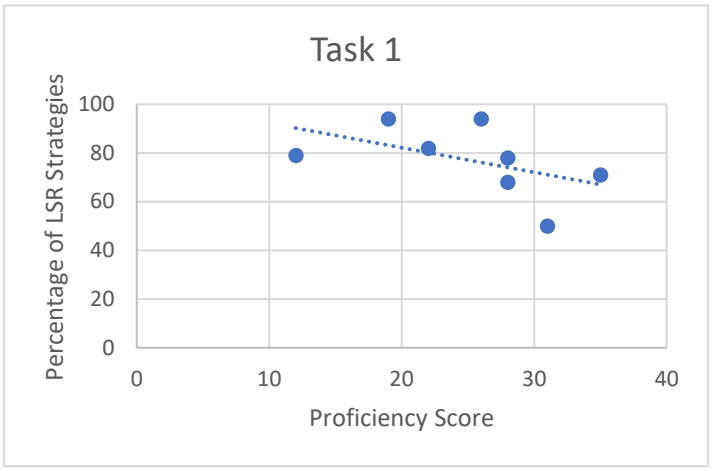
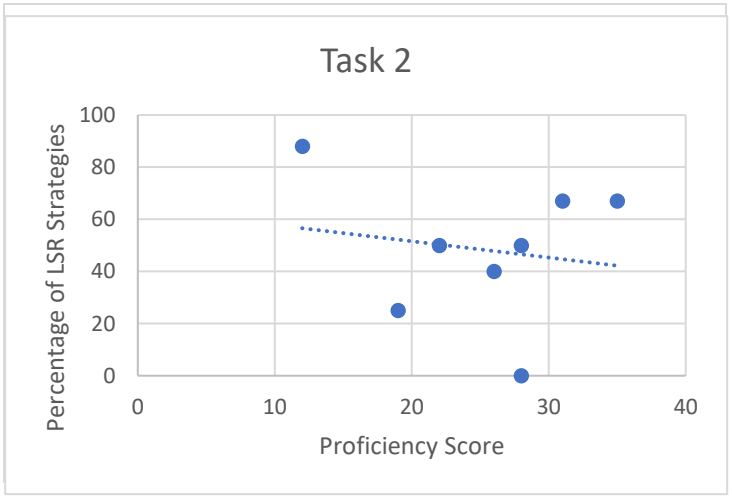


Figure 36: Proficiency Score vs. Percentage of LSR-based Strategies, Task 2



3.5 Types of communication strategies in broad categories

Table 26 shows the number and percentage of strategies in each broad category (achievement, avoidance, and confirmation) that the learners used in each task.

Table 26: Number & Percentage of CSs by Category

	Achievement	%	Avoidance	%	Confirmation	%	Total
Alvin R1T1	53	100%					53
Alvin R1T2	12	71%			5	29%	17
Alvin R2T1	31	94%	1	3%	1	3%	33
Alvin R2T2	2	100%					2
Fay R1T1	27	79%			7	21%	34
Fay R1T2	3	100%					3
Fay R2T1	50	88%			7	12%	57
Fay R2T2	6	86%			1	14%	7
Jenny R1T1	32	100%					32
Jenny R1T2	4	100%					4
Jenny R2T1	39	98%	1	3%			40
Jenny R2T2	1	100%					1
Ionuț T1	20	100%					20
Ionuț T2	3	100%					3
Rachel T1	24	100%					24
Rachel T2	11	100%					11

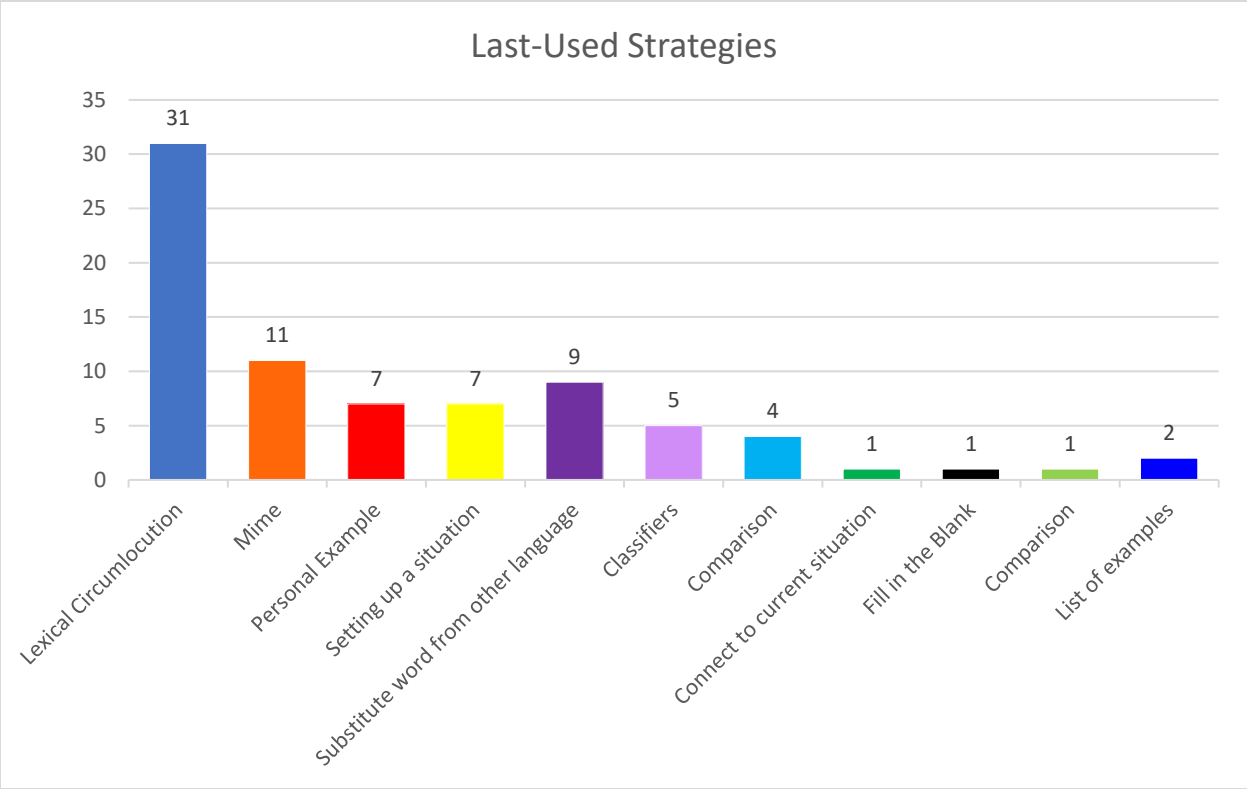
While achievement strategies were by far the most common throughout the whole study, the next most commonly used category was confirmation strategies, which were used by two of the learners (notably, the two learners with the lowest proficiency levels). Alvin used them 29% of

the time in R1T2, and 3% of the time in R2T1. He favored the "check for understanding" strategy but also used the "clarify meaning" strategy. Fay used confirmation strategies 21% of the time in R1T1, 12% of the time in R2T1, and 14% of the time in R2T2. She used a combination of the "clarify meaning" and "clarify in another context" strategies.

3.6 Last achievement strategies used before success

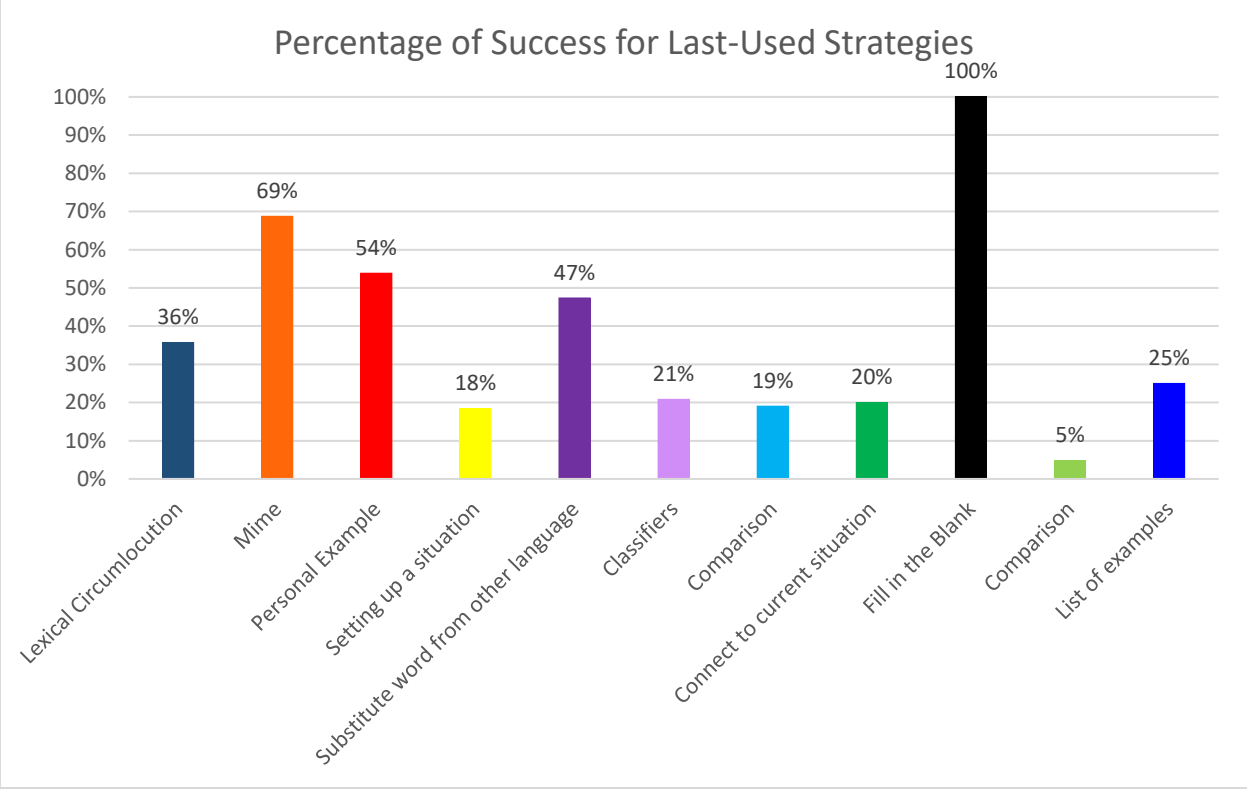
It is also useful to examine which strategies were used most successfully. First, Figure 37**: Last-Used Achievement Strategies (Task 1, Rounds 1&2)** shows the last achievement strategies used by all participants before succeeding in communicating the desired concept in Task 1. The last-strategy data does not include abandoned attempts. It shows that Lexical Circumlocution was used last most often.

Figure 37: Last-Used Achievement Strategies (Task 1, Rounds 1&2)



This finding, however, does not mean that Lexical Circumlocution was the most successful strategy—simply that it was the last one used before success. Its success may have been partially the result of other strategies used previously. Figure 38 shows the percentage of the time that these "last-strategies" were successful out of the total number of the times they were used. Although Lexical Circumlocution was most commonly the last strategy used, it was not the most successful, given the number of times it was used unsuccessfully (64% of the time). It should be kept in mind that the "Fill in the Blank" strategy, although 100% successful, was only used one time throughout Task 1. The strategy with the second-highest percentage of success was Mime, at 69%. This was also the second-most common last-used strategy.

Figure 38: Percentage of Success for Last-Used Strategies (Task 1, Rounds 1&2)



CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses possible implications and applications of this study's results. Section 4.1 Chapter 1discusses the main finding of this research—that, unlike what previous studies have implied, learners make conscious decisions based on their shared knowledge with the interlocutor, using the repertoire of communication tools that are available to them. Section 4.2 goes on to reflect on some possible explanations for unexpected results, and Section 4.3 asks some questions about previous research done in the area of communication strategies. Section 4.4 discusses a separate category of communication strategies that was demonstrated in the results of the present study that, to my knowledge, has not been discussed in other studies. Section 4.5 discusses the fact that higher proficiency in a language is linked to better use of communication strategies. Section 4.6 discusses other motives influencing learners' choices outside of pure communication goals. Section 4.7 details some notes for future research, and Section 4.8 presents some applications that language learners can take from this study. Lastly, Section 4.9 discusses applications for future research in the area of communication strategies.

4.1 Learners' conscious decisions

The main finding of this study is that learners' communication strategies are not purely dependent on their level of proficiency in LSR. In their communication with other people, learners use what has been called Theory of Mind. The basic idea of Theory of Mind is that as people mature, they acquire an ability to understand and predict the thoughts, desires, and knowledge of another person. This could be based on either prior experience with that person, or just the context of the situation (de Villiers 2007). Although most studies done on Theory of Mind focus on children and the time they begin to develop Theory of Mind, this basic element runs throughout the whole theory. In the context of this study, the participants are using Theory

of Mind to figure out what the interlocutor knows, and then using that knowledge to communicate with them.

In general, the learners avoided using communication strategies that were based on most of the spoken languages that they speak, since they knew that the interlocutors did not know these languages. When they did use spoken language strategies, they tried to use Romanian as much as possible. For example, in one instance, Fay started to fingerspell an English word, but after only one letter, stopped and switched to the Romanian word. When asked about the switch, she said she remembered the Romanian word just as she started spelling the English word, so decided to use that instead. In another situation, Rachel told the interlocutor that she did not know a Romanian word for the concept, but fingerspelled what she guessed the word might be in Romanian, based on the English word and her knowledge of Romanian morphology (see Example (**19**). This strategy indicates that even though she did not have the Romanian word as an option, she still felt that she should use the Romanian word instead of the English word, so she made an attempt.

Even when using English words, it was possible for the learners to be thinking about the most effective way of communicating. When one learner (Rachel) was explaining the concept of a personality test to the interlocutor, she fingerspelled two English words: “introvert” and “extrovert”. These words are Latin-based, and it is possible that she realized that they would likely have cognates in Romanian (also a Latin-based language), and therefore it would be more likely that the interlocutor would recognize them.

All of these examples are evidence that the learners were actively thinking about which languages would be most helpful to them in the task—that is, which languages they shared with the interlocutor. Rachel mentioned after the task was complete that if she had been in a different situation (for example, with a Deaf signer from another country), then she would not have used fingerspelling at all. She knew that she could use fingerspelling in this situation because the interlocutor had a working knowledge of written Romanian. However, in other countries she might not have used the fingerspelling option, because Deaf in those places might not have as

high of a literacy rate. Later, she also mentioned that the same consideration applied to different people within the Romanian Deaf community, because some Deaf understand written Romanian better than others.

Another way that two of the beginning learners relied on a non-target language to help them communicate was to use word order from English (sometimes I could hear them whispering in English as they signed, and they were following English word order). When asked about this, these learners said that they were still unsure about LSR word order, and that they thought it would be better to follow English word order, rather than Cantonese (their first language), because they thought that English word order would probably be closer to LSR word order than that of Cantonese. Whether or not this is true is irrelevant; the point is that they had put some thought into the previous languages that they had learned, and how they could be helpful to them in current communication situations.

One of the findings of this study is that learners make more conscious decisions than was previously recognized. The strategies that the learners use are not just a marker or result of their ability in the language, but more a function of consciously thinking about the options that are available to them and deciding which one will be the most effective at meeting their communicative goal. The learner is not only thinking about how they can communicate a certain word or concept—they are thinking about how their own knowledge and experience overlaps with that of the interlocutor, and what they can use from that shared knowledge to effectively communicate.

As a further example of this, Fay, after unsuccessfully describing a concept, remembered that when she had previously done language lessons with the interlocutor, they usually gave examples. She then decided to give an example of the concept instead, because she knew it was something that had worked for her in the past with this particular person.

(23)

Fay: *It's a book, with many words written in it. And, with the words is written—*

NS3: *Do you mean a notebook?*

Fay: *For example—when I don't know a Romanian word, I need to search for it. What can I use?*

NS3: *A dictionary.*

The learner used this strategy several times throughout the course of the study. For example, Fay decided to talk about the interlocutor's father to elicit the target word, "mother", because in her previous conversations with the interlocutor, they had often talked about the interlocutor's father:

(24)

Fay: *Your father's wife.*

NS3: *My father?*

Fay: *Yes, his wife.*

NS3: *His wife.*

Fay: *Who is she?*

NS3: *Nina. My mother.*

Another learner used an event that he knew the interlocutor was going to attend (a baby shower) to help him describe the concept of "surprise", as was shown in Example 7.

(7)

Alvin: *On Saturday there is a party for Daniela. Daniela doesn't know. When Daniela opens the doors and goes inside, how will she feel?*

NS2: *Surprised.*

All of these examples show the learners using their knowledge of the interlocutor, based on either their previous experiences together or something that they knew about the interlocutor's life. This knowledge helped them to make decisions about which strategies would communicate most effectively.

The learners made conscious decisions in many ways throughout this research. They chose certain communication strategies based on what they knew and what they wanted to learn, but they also showed that they were aware of what they did not know. One learner, when trying to communicate the concept of "vote", realized that this was going to be difficult because he didn't know how Romanians vote. Therefore, he decided to talk about a situation in which people would vote: electing a new president.

(25)

Alvin: *Everyone in the city wants to have a president. What do they do?*

NS1: *They vote.*

The same learner, while trying to get the sign for "Facebook", realized that the interlocutor did not understand his description, but also knew that he did not know the right vocabulary to go into more detail, so he tried another way with something more visual — drawing out the Facebook icon in the air. This awareness of the things he did not know— whether cultural, as in the voting example, or linguistic, as shown in the Facebook example—allowed him to decide against certain strategies and choose other strategies that would be more effective for him.

The fact that only one of the learners used a strategy where they voiced a word from a spoken language could be significant—perhaps the learners were generally aware that this would not be an effective strategy to use with Deaf people, because of how difficult it is to read lips. If this is the case, it shows that the learners are thinking about the interlocutor and what will be easiest for them to understand—not just what will be the easiest way for them to show the desired concept. Thinking about the interlocutor and how they will understand the chosen strategies shows an awareness that communication is not only about the learner sending out a message, but also about the way that the interlocutor receives that message.

Of course, it is possible that some of these decisions were not conscious, and that the learners created reasons for their decisions during the interview process. My questions may have caused the learners to think more carefully about what they had done during the research, and therefore influenced their responses. However, there were instances during the interview process where the learners were not sure about why they chose to use one communication strategy over another. Sometimes their answer was simply, "I don't know," or "It was just the first thing that popped into my head." This shows that not all of a learner's decisions are conscious, and that their proficiency level in the language does still have some effect on the communication strategies they choose.

4.2 Possible explanations for unexpected results

Based on previous studies (see Chapter 2), the expected results would have been to see greater use of strategies based on other languages by the beginning learners, particularly their L1, and more LSR-based strategies used by the advanced learners. This expectation would be understandable, since beginning learners tend to have less command of the language, and therefore would not be able to use it as effectively in the beginning stages of learning. For this reason, it was surprising to find that the advanced learners did not use more LSR-based strategies than the beginning learners. In fact, it was the beginning learners who used a higher percentage

of LSR-based strategies than the advanced learners (see Table 7 in the Results section), and even the beginning learners showed a slight decrease in their use of LSR on the second round. This finding shows that communication strategies are not just a function of the learner's proficiency in the language but are based on the tools that the learner has available to them. There could be other reasons for the choices the learners made, such as personal preference or the language they were using immediately prior to their research activity.

Three of the five learners (Rachel, Ionuț and Jenny) had some knowledge of other sign languages other than Romanian Sign Language (the two most beginning learners, Alvin and Fay, had only learned Romanian Sign Language). With the hypothesis that the more advanced learners would use more LSR-based strategies than the beginning learners, it was also expected that they would use less of the other sign languages that they had learned. However, this appeared not to be the case. The two most advanced learners (Ionuț & Rachel) used signs from other sign languages as strategies to communicate more often than the beginning learner who had learned another sign language (Jenny). Perhaps this is because, with more experience signing in this community, these learners had realized that using signs from another sign language was helpful. Of the two most advanced learners, one (Rachel) focused on International Sign as her foreign sign language source. The other advanced learner (Ionuț) is well known in the community for mixing up the different sign languages he has learned in everyday conversations, so this influenced the strategies he used during the tasks. This use of other sign languages seemed to be connected more to the individual learner's communication style than to a lack of knowledge of the target language.

If the comparison between learners is not considered, it is still clear that all of the participants, whether beginning or advanced learners, used LSR-based strategies more than strategies based on other languages. Sign language strategies in general (including strategies based in LSR, words from other sign languages, and sign language classifiers) were used far more than spoken language strategies, even by those learners who had not learned another sign language outside of LSR. One reason for this is likely that since the interlocutors are Deaf, the

learners may have assumed that spoken-language strategies would be less useful. Another reason for this might be that the L1 for all of the learners was a spoken language. Perhaps the change in modality was a large enough difference to them that they did not feel that spoken-language based strategies would be very useful.

One further reason for this is that the beginning learners did not know very much (or were not very comfortable with) written Romanian, which would be the most likely common spoken language for them to use with the Deaf person. Since the spoken languages they knew were unknown to the Deaf person, they may have decided not to use them, or only to use them as a last resort.

4.3 Questions about previous research

One factor previous research on the topic of communication strategies did not take into consideration was the effect of whether the interlocutors shared a language with the learners. In previous studies, the learners did have a language in common with the interlocutors, which was usually the learners' L1. This detail polarized the options that the learners had and made it more likely that their communication strategies would vary between using the target language and their L1. In the current study, there was more variation, since only one learner's L1 was known to the interlocutor, and the others' L1s were unknown. This motivated them to use languages that were neither the target language nor their L1 to communicate, which adds another layer of complexity to their communication.

In previous studies, no other languages that the learners had experience with were used as options, probably because the interlocutors would not understand those languages. A learner must think about the options that they have available to them, and then rule out the options that are not available to the interlocutor. Then, they can choose a strategy based on the remaining options. In previous studies where the interlocutor knew the learner's L1, there might have been

other options that were available to the learners which they didn't choose, either because they felt that their L1 would be more effective, or because they were more comfortable with their L1.

In this situation, the interlocutor's lack of knowledge of the learner's L1 might have caused the learner to choose to use more LSR-based strategies. Especially for Alvin and Fay, LSR-based strategies were the option that was most available to both learner and interlocutor.

If the interlocutor knows the learner's L1, then this makes the learner's decision easier, because they can use their L1, which is the language they would be most comfortable with, to communicate. However, in this situation, the learners were forced to choose other options that they were not as comfortable with—the other languages that they have learned, whether fluently or not. If the language that is available to both learner and interlocutor is one that the learner is less proficient in, then they would need to be more creative with their choice of communication strategies.

Therefore, the availability of the learner's L1 as a shared language with the interlocutor heavily influenced previous studies, leading them to find that L1 strategies were more likely in less proficient learners. However, as the current study shows, this was not a simple matter of the learner's proficiency in the L2, but a factor of the availability of linguistic resources that could be used for communication.

4.4 Confirmation strategies

The learners in this study produced several instances of strategies that did not fit into the previously recognized categories of achievement strategies or avoidance strategies. One pattern that kept appearing in the data was when the learner did not necessarily use strategies to arrive at a communication goal, but instead used them to monitor the interlocutor's understanding or the mutual understanding of both parties. Three different strategies fit into this category. One of these strategies, the Clarify Meaning strategy, involved the learner taking a sign that the interlocutor had given them as a possible answer to the sign they were looking for, and exploring

the meaning of that sign by summarizing what they understood it to mean. They were checking to make sure that their understanding of the sign matched up with the interlocutor's understanding of the sign (see Example 20).

Another strategy that fit into this category was Clarify in Another Context. In this strategy, the learner would take a sign that they had received and try to use it in a different sentence or context—again, to check that they are understanding the same way that the interlocutor understands (see Example 21).

The third type of confirmation strategy used was simply Checking for Understanding, where the learner asked the interlocutor if they understood what they were saying. This strategy helped them to know that the communication was effective before continuing (see Example 22).

Again, these strategies do not help the learner to arrive at their communication goal, and they do not fit into the category of avoiding the subject or giving up on their goal. However, they do help the learner to monitor the situation and make sure that the learner and the interlocutor are not misunderstanding each other or thinking about two different concepts.

Only two out of the five learners used confirmation strategies, and these were the two learners with the lowest proficiency levels (Alvin and Fay). This could be due to a lower confidence in their language ability—if they were not sure about the words they were using, they would be more likely to double check that they were communicating clearly. On the other hand, a more advanced learner may have more confidence that they were communicating clearly, based on their previous conversation experience.

Another reason that the confirmation strategies were only used by the most beginning learners could be because of feedback from the interlocutors. Feedback is heavily used in sign language contexts, to show that the person is listening and whether or not they understand. One possibility is that the advanced learners did not need to use confirmation strategies because they were receiving and understanding the feedback from the interlocutors, showing that they understood what the learner was saying. On the other hand, the opposite could also be true—the beginning learners could have been receiving feedback from the interlocutors, showing that they

did not understand what the learner was saying—and they used confirmation strategies to follow up on this.

4.5 Higher proficiency linked to better use of communication strategies

This study reaffirmed the observations made in previous studies that learners with more proficiency in the language use a wider variety of communication strategies—possibly because of their higher skill in the language. That is, the higher a learner's language proficiency is, the more communication strategies they will have at their disposal, even though overall, they may have less need to resort to such strategies.

The idea that advanced learners are able to use communication strategies more effectively is supported by the fact that the beginning learners used more repetition—they repeated themselves without changing anything about what they had said. One example of this is when Jenny tried to elicit the sign for "sailor".

(26)

Jenny: *I'm a person in a boat.*

NS2: *Noah?*

Jenny: *What's the person called?*

Jenny: *A person in a boat.*

NS2: *A fisherman?*

The more advanced learners, instead of repeating themselves without changing anything about what they had said, more often came up with new ways of making themselves understood: new examples, or descriptions, etc.

For example, Rachel, one of the advanced learners, used eight different strategies (four different example situations, a personal situation, a request for a simile, and two connections to

the current situation) before she finally resorted to fingerspelling a word. (27 provides the name of each strategy underneath where it occurs in the text, using horizontal lines to separate the example from the strategy name.

(27)

Rachel:	*Right now, in this game—I'm signing and what are you doing?*
	^(Connect to current situation)
NS2:	*Hmm…*
Rachel:	*You know, it's the same as when the Deaf get together and play that game, where everyone sits in a circle and I sign something and you, what do you do?*
	^(Personal situation)
NS2:	*Yes… I give an answer.*
Rachel:	*Yes. And if it's really hard, what do you do?*
NS2:	*I find the answer.*
Rachel:	*But it's really hard. For example, I am thinking of a bicycle, and you don't know that. So I act out someone riding on a bicycle. But I haven't said anything. What do you say?*
	^(Setting up a situation)
NS2:	*I say "bicycle".*
Rachel:	*Yes. But if you don't know and you're trying to think what it could be?*
NS2:	*You mean how do I answer? Oh, yeah, um… what's the sign… um…*
Rachel:	*That's OK, I'll think of another example. [thinks for a while] Ok, for example. I don't know if this will work but I'll try it. For example, I'm watching a movie, but*

	there aren't any subtitles. You're in the group watching the movie. What do you do? You're watching the movie, and you think, "What is he saying?"
	^(Setting up a situation)
Rachel:	*...No? Ok. Hmm… A while ago I went to the movies with a group of Deaf people—*
	^(Setting up a situation)
NS2:	*Ohhh, you can help and translate for them?*
Rachel:	*Yes, that's true, I could help! But if I didn't say anything, what do the Deaf people do?*
NS2:	*They watch the movie without the subtitles.*
Rachel:	*Ok, I'll think of another example. Hmm…*
NS2:	*This one's hard!*
Rachel:	*Yeah, it's hard! It's hard to come up with a good example, too. I thought with the bicycle example that you were going to get it, but no. Darn. So I have to think of something else.*
NS2:	*Can I try something? [stands up and acts out getting into a car, and fans herself] What is it?*
Rachel:	*You're warm? AC? No? Darn. So what did I just do right now?*
	^(Connect to current situation)
NS2:	*You were wrong again.*
Rachel:	Y*es! So did I know the answer, or did I not know?*
NS2:	*You didn't know.*
Rachel:	*Right, I didn't know, so I didn't succeed. Ugh, this one's hard. [thinks for a few seconds] Ok. Moving on. Here's another example. At school, they give you a test, you know? It has a multiple-choice question. But what do you do if you look at the*

	test and you don't know the answer? There's a list of choices: A, B, C, and D. What do you do, do you give up? Or…
	^(Setting up a situation)
NS2:	*I pray for help.*
Rachel:	*[laughs] Amen! And?*
NS2:	*[laughs] I copy from a cheat sheet.*
Rachel:	*[laughs] No! Don't do that! [laughs] If your cheat sheet doesn't say anything, and you pray and God doesn't tell you the answer, what do you do?*
NS2:	*I leave it blank. I don't write anything.*
Rachel:	*No answer? Darn. But it's not hard!*
NS2:	*If I knew the answer, I would write it.*
Rachel:	*If you don't know the answer, you could look at the list and close your eyes and pick one.*
NS2:	*Yeah, I could just pick one.*
Rachel:	*What's another sign for "picking one"?*
	^(Asking for a synonym)
NS2:	*Hmm…*
Rachel:	*It's just like when you're playing that game and the person is acting out riding on the bicycle, and you…? That's the other sign.*
NS2:	*I don't know, this is hard!*
Rachel:	*I don't know… It's G-H-I-C-I(Romanian word for "guess")*

This example shows that as the learner's proficiency in the language grows, not only do they have a larger linguistic repertoire to choose from, but they also become more skilled in their use of communication strategies.

4.6 Other motives

It is important to note that learners were not only thinking about their communication goals during this research. When asked about the reasons for choosing the strategies that they did, Fay replied that she knew she probably could have fingerspelled the Romanian word and communicated the concept clearly, but she also knew that if she used LSR to describe the concept, she would learn more in the process. This example shows that larger goals and motivations can affect the strategies that learners use, beyond the immediate goal of clearly communicating a concept. This insight is a good reminder that even though a learner's immediate goal might be communication, in the end, they are still a learner, and can treat even an everyday conversation as a way to learn more of the language.

4.7 Most effective communication strategies

Figure 37 (see Section 3.6) shows that the Lexical Circumlocution strategy was most commonly the last strategy used before successfully communicating the concept. However, this does not necessarily mean it was the most successful strategy used in the study. Since Lexical Circumlocution was also the most common strategy used, it follows that it would also be the most commonly the last strategy used. The Fill-in-the-Blank strategy had the highest success rate—although since it was only used once, it may be more helpful to look at the Mime category, which was the second most common strategy to be used last, and also had a 69% success rate, as shown in Figure 38 (Section 3.6).

4.8 Notes for future research

There was clearly a vast difference between the results of the first task, which was more structured and presented as a "game", and the second task, which was more free and closer to a real-life conversational situation. In the results of the structured task, the learners stuck mostly to LSR-based strategies, while there was much more variety in the less-structured task (although

there was also much less data, so there were fewer chances to show this variety). It is possible that the way the first task was presented made the learners think that they should only use LSR-based strategies (maybe they were more aware that they were being observed, or because it was presented as a game, they took on the challenge of using only their target language). This finding will be something to keep in mind for further research—did the structure of the first task skew the data? A study might produce more realistic data if it focused more on the second type of task, even if it required a longer time period for the task, in order to obtain more examples of CSs.

Another thing to be noted about the nature of this research is that Task 1 was set up so that it only produced examples of direct requests for help, while Task 2 allowed for a broader range of strategies. If someone wished to see more examples of, say, avoiding a topic, or substitution of other words in the target language and then moving on, then it would be necessary to focus more on a less structured task like Task 2.

One possible issue with the research was the small number of participants. A group of only five participants is a very small data set to work with. I believe the results of this study are valid and helpful—they have pointed out some gaps in the available research, and the fact that the results are so different from other studies is a good reminder that a situation can drastically change depending on the circumstances of the study. However, it would be interesting to see the same study done with a larger group of participants, to see if the findings still hold true when more people are involved. It would be especially interesting to include a wider range of participants—that is, people with many different first languages as well as more people whose first language is known to the interlocutors.

4.9 Applications for learners

The information from this study could be put into use by remembering which of the strategies were most effective in communicating the desired concepts and putting those strategies into use in language learning and communication.

Learning about communication strategies and becoming aware of the strategies that they choose to use (whether consciously or unconsciously) can be helpful to a learner, as it will show them what their present situation is and can allow for thoughtful changes in future learning. For example, this study was able to provide the participants with the opportunity to observe, think about, and discuss the communication strategies that they use, and how they can use them more effectively in the future. After the trials were complete, one of the participants shared that he had been thinking about his communication strategies and thought he saw a pattern. He also shared that he wants to try to use different strategies in the future in order to communicate more effectively.

It would be helpful to language learners to learn more about different communication strategies and to practice using them so that they can expand their skills in this area. It could be helpful to them to pay attention to the strategies that they use in their first language, think about how they could be applied in a second language, and then put them into practice. In this way, they can learn more about their strengths and weaknesses in different strategies and change the way that they use strategies more effectively. Another way to practice would be to play games like Taboo, on which Task 1 was based, where there is a communication goal and they need to figure out a way to get the message across. If they are interested in learning new communication strategies, it is also helpful to observe other foreign-language users and see what strategies they use when they anticipate a communication barrier.

Another situation in which a sign language learner might find themselves is trying to communicate in sign language in an international situation. Often when Deaf people from different countries get together, they will use similar communication strategies to bridge the gap between the sign language that they know and a sign language they do not know. Learning more about different communication strategies—especially the non-linguistic strategies such as mime, or strategies using sign language classifiers—would help someone communicate cross-linguistically in situations such as these.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a second-language learner has many tools with which they can communicate with speakers of their target language. They make conscious decisions about the tools that they have at their disposal in order to communicate most effectively. The learner often searches for knowledge that they have in common with the interlocutor and can then use that knowledge to communicate more clearly. This study reflects that conscious searching for shared information, because unlike in previous studies, where the interlocutors were familiar with the L1 of the learners, the L1s of the learners in this study were unknown to the interlocutors. Because of this, the learners were forced to continue searching more in depth for shared knowledge between the two parties.

While proficiency in the language is important, it is not the final determinant of a learner's communication success in the language. The learner's skill at coming up with different communication strategies to use, and their skill of using them successfully do seem to grow as their proficiency grows, but this is something that the learner may be able to improve through focused attention and practice. Learners should pay attention to the communication strategies they already use, whether in their first language or second languages, and think about the types of situations in which those strategies are helpful to them. It would also be helpful for learners to learn about different kinds of strategies so that they will be more prepared to use different strategies if and when the opportunity arises. In a situation where the learner shares a large amount of knowledge with the interlocutor, it might be easy to communicate, but in other situations where the learner needs to search harder for shared knowledge, a wider choice of strategies would prove useful. Learning about different communication strategies and practicing them would help prepare learners for future communication gaps.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

LEARNER SELF-SSSESSMENT SURVEY

Please answer the questions below:

1. What is your first (native) language?

2. What other languages have you learned (signed or spoken), and how long did you spend learning them?

3. How long have you been learning Romanian Sign Language?

4. Self-Assessment: Please answer the following questions, putting a check in the boxes which fit you best.

My language is:

Barely at this level	Sometimes at this level, but not always	Almost always at this level	
			I can greet people politely when I see them and respond appropriately to a greeting.
			I can thank people for doing something for me or respond to someone thanking me in a culturally appropriate way.
			I can understand farewell expressions and say good-bye politely.

			I can tell someone my name and where I'm from.
			I can count to 100 and use some other words for larger numbers
			I can name 10 or more food items.
			I can refer to categories of people of different age and gender, such as men, women, boys, girls, babies…
			I can talk about common activities that people do in a simple sentence.
			I can correctly name the colors of different objects.
			If people are really patient and help me by making suggestions about what they think I mean, I can ask and answer simple questions.
			When I first meet someone, I can introduce myself, giving my name and basic personal information about my family, giving their names and simple information about them, such as their occupations or what they look like.
			I can respond to questions about my personal likes and dislikes.
			I can make arrangements to meet somebody later, and tell them where and when to meet up.
			I can ask for directions on how to get somewhere, or give someone directions on how to get from one place to another.

			I can describe simple symptoms of health problems that I have, and respond to simple questions about my health.
			I can usually find a way to deal with simple social situations, even though I sometimes have to repeat myself to get my meaning across because of lack of vocabulary or grammar or small signing errors.
			I can describe my general routine for each day.
			I can talk about my home country or city, especially if I can show pictures of the place.
			I can describe in detail a particular place, such as a school, park, or store.
			I can talk about things I like to do, such as leisure activities, favorite hobbies or pastimes.
			I can talk about something I expect to do in the future, such as a planned trip or activity.
			I can create whole sentences and strings of sentences when I am speaking, rather than reciting something I have memorized.
			I can give advice to someone else, giving reasons for my advice.
			I can give clear instructions about what I would like someone to do, explaining the steps involved in carrying out the activity.
			I can lodge a complaint, giving the reasons and details of why I am dissatisfied.

			I can answer most questions about my daily work.
			I can carry on a sustained conversation without too many pauses, even though I sometimes still have to search for the right word.
			Most of the time, people understand me the first time I speak, although sometimes they still "negotiate meaning" by providing my with words, or restating what I've said.
			I can describe things that used to happen in the past, such as things I used to do when I was younger, or people and places I used to know and visit.
			I can compare and contrast two objects, customs, or places.
			I can talk about my future plans or goals.
			I can explain a simple process that I know how to do (e.g. making bread, repairing something, putting up a tent).
			I can give a brief, organized, factual summary of what happened in an event at which I was present.
			I can state the advantages and disadvantages of a situation (such as living in a big city) or a decision (such as whether to stay in school)
			My speech is understandable to most people, even if they think I have an accent. Sometimes I am still asked to repeat or clarify what I said, but not often.

APPENDIX B

WORD LISTS

Wordlist #1

- Cactus
- Pasta
- Stamp
- Sailor
- Oradea
- Church
- Facebook
- Lazy
- Hungry
- Vote

Wordlist #2

- Dictionary
- Honey
- Thermometer
- Mother
- Romania
- Café
- Solar eclipse
- Weather
- Eager
- Stress

Wordlist #3

- Coffee
- Bread
- Ice
- Pirate
- America
- Outer space
- Surprise
- Summer
- Flexible
- Crazy

Wordlist #4

- TV
- Volcano
- Movie
- Clown
- College
- Europe
- Christmas
- Exercise
- Optimistic
- Guess

Wordlist #5

- Watermelon
- Ketchup
- Diaper
- Actor
- Hospital
- Asia
- Puzzle
- Medicine
- Famous
- Distracted

Wordlist #6

- Flower
- Tomato
- Couch
- Soldier
- Adult
- Ghost
- Test
- Divorce
- Proud
- Agree

Wordlist #7

- Motorcycle
- Swimming Pool
- Potato
- Doctor
- Girl/boyfriend
- Firefighter
- Class
- Skype
- Trust
- Wrong

APPENDIX C

VIDEO LIST

(NO WORDS)

Carrot Crazy

Two men fight over who will catch a rabbit, and their attempts to catch him escalate to be more and more ridiculous.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDUm4Nj7XJ8

Kiwi

A kiwi bird creates a space on a cliffside where he can feel like he's flying.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPjdWN0oHRY

Bridge

A moose and a bear fight over who will cross a very narrow bridge first, but a rabbit and a raccoon find a way to cross using teamwork.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_X_AfRk9F9w

Knick Knack

A snowman living in a snowglobe tries to escape so he can join the other knick-knacks on the shelf.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfwVtiOyIfw

(WORDS)

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

This is a retelling of Goldilocks and the Three Bears (a fairytale where a little girl finds an empty house in the woods and makes a mess before the owners come home).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KndSVsY5HWM

Brad gets caught with weed

Parents talk to their son after they find out he brought drugs to a party.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEKf4JLmuMs

Who's Leon?

A family goes to church on Christmas Eve to see their son sing in the choir.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THUfgj_4oKk

Eric's talk with Topanga

A teenager tries to talk his little brother's friend out of having a crush on him.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJlVhf_Gb9E

The Denominator

Parents try to help their son with fractions in his math homework, which turns out to be too difficult for them.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMLZexFH50c

Can You Ever Really Change?

A man talks about taking personality tests and how everyone's personality changes throughout their life.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FqgrgVPvio

The Causes of Cholera

A man talks about the causes of cholera and the cholera epidemic in Yemen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdYDkcjTK2k

Your Body's Real Age

A man talks about the parts of your body that are constantly replacing themselves, vs. the parts that stay with you from when you were born until you die.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nwfg157hejM

Discipline

A woman talks about the sign for discipline in ASL and what it taught her about discipline.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0oV-X802W8

Forgiveness and Release

A woman talks about how we respond to apologies and how that can affect our ability to forgive.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiBB5iVqHQg

APPENDIX D

LEARNER CONSENT FORM

____ 1. I am working with people who are learning Romanian Sign Language as a second language. I would like you to help me in this project, which will be the research for my Master's thesis about communication strategies used by second-language learners of Romanian Sign Language.

____2. During this project, I will ask you to read a list of words/concepts, and, without using the corresponding sign in Romanian Sign Language, get the fluent signer to guess the sign that you are communicating.

____3. I will also ask you to watch a set of videos. You will choose a video from the series where you are able to describe most but not all of the video using Romanian Sign Language. You will then describe the video to the fluent signer. If you need help with any signs or how to say something, please get help from the fluent signer.

____4. During both of these tasks, you will be video recorded. I will analyze these videos later on, for my thesis about communication strategies.

____5. After both tasks are finished, I will watch the video with both you and the fluent signer. We will stop the video at certain spots and I will ask you about why you chose to use the signs that you did.

____6. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to participate, that is not a problem—please tell me at any time. Even after we begin the research process, you are free to stop at any time. After the research process is complete, if you decide that you do not want your data or some portion of it to be included, please tell me and I will remove your data from the project.

____7. There will be no monetary compensation for participants in this research. However, you will benefit from what you learn about your use of the language, and will be able to apply that to further learning.

____8. If you would like a copy of the videos of yourself during this research, I can give you a copy to keep.

____9. I am required to keep these videos for 3 years after I finish the research. However, if, three years after my research analysis is complete, you would like me to destroy the videos with you in them, please tell me.

I discussed the information in this form with _____, who has verbally agreed to participate (on video). This person:

____ Would like for me to destroy their videos 3 years after the research is finished.

____ Is okay with my keeping their videos from the research

____ Would like to receive a copy of their videos from the research.

APPENDIX E

NATIVE SIGNER CONSENT FORM

____1. I am working with people who are learning Romanian Sign Language as a second language. I would like you to help me in this project, which will be the research for my Master's thesis about communication strategies used by second-language learners of Romanian Sign Language.

____2. During this project, you will be asked to sit with someone who is learning Romanian Sign Language. They will have a list of words that they will try to communicate to you, but they are not allowed to use the sign that corresponds to the word on their list. You will guess what sign they are trying to communicate to you.

____3. In the next task, the learner will describe a video to you that they have just watched. If they ask for help on how to say something, you can help them.

____4. During both of these tasks, you and the learner will be video recorded. I will analyze these videos later on, for my thesis about communication strategies.

____5. After both tasks are finished, I will watch the video with both you and the learner. I will ask you to stop the video at the parts where the learner asked for help, or where they signed something that was not natural Romanian Sign Language. Then I will ask the learner about why they signed that way.

____6. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to participate, that is not a problem—please tell me at any time. Even after we begin the research process, you are free to stop at any time. After the research process is complete, if you decide that you do not want your data to be included, please tell me and I will remove your data from the project.

____7. It is your choice if you would like to be paid for your participation in this research. If you would like, I will pay you 10 lei per hour for your help.

____8. If you would like a copy of the videos of yourself during this research, I can give you a copy to keep.

____9. I am required to keep these videos for 3 years after I finish the research. However, if, three years after my research analysis is complete, you would like me to destroy the videos with you in them, please tell me.

I discussed the information in this form with _____, who has verbally agreed to participate (on video). This person:

____ Would like for me to destroy their videos 3 years after the research is finished.

____ Is okay with my keeping their videos from the research

____Would like to be paid 10 lei/hour for their participation in this research

____Does not want to be paid for their participation in this research

____ Would like to receive a copy of their videos from the research.

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